

# SCIENCE FICTION REVIEW

*AN INTERVIEW WITH JOHN VARLEY*

*S-F AND S-E-X* By SAM MERWIN, JR.

AFTERTHOUGHTS ON LOGAN'S RUN BY WILLIAM F. NOLAN

AN EVOLUTION OF CONSCIOUSNESS

BY MARION ZIMMER BRADLEY

**22**

\$1.50





4-11-77 SFR #21 went riding off to the printer today, screaming "WHY ME?" We all have to make sacrifices. I understand it isn't a painful process, having plates made of your pages, but the originals always have horror tales to tell when they return...spashed acid, horrid dirty thumbs, sneering printers' comments ... Still, it has to be done.

# Eldridge Cleaver, former black revolutionary and newly converted super Christian, is in town, doing his Jesus thing. He denies his conversion is a 'matter of convenience' to mitigate his probable sentence for three counts of assault with intent to kill on Oakland police officers from 1968.

I believe him. Yes. Because he is a weak-identity type, who went into communism/socialism for the emotional and identity security it gave him; he had a role, he was locked into an identity and all he had to do was say the lines and do the stage directions. But that role went sour, got him into all kinds of trouble, lost his glamour and left him high and dry and broke and forgotten. Shit on that scene. So he unconsciously went looking for another role, another coat to put on, and found Christianity--another close-fitting easy part, all the answers provided, no intellectual work involved, thank you, and it is with the Good Guys this time. Serve a few years, keep up the image, and then...then switch again to the newest, most interesting-looking role available....

# A glimpse into the underlying attitudes of a congressman was provided by Al Ullman, from my own state of Oregon, in an interview printed by the Sunday OREGONIAN yesterday. I quote the story:

'The Carter administration has been fighting proposals for permanent tax reductions that, in its view, would restrict future options for the wide-ranging tax reform Carter has promised to submit in October, as well as for possible future programs.'

'Ullman agreed: "I just don't think we can accept a permanent tax cut. That would have to be in the tax reform bill. We can't give away revenues.'

"I couldn't even see a tax cut. We all know there is no such thing as a temporary tax cut."

'Ullman said the kind of legislation he has in mind would probably neither increase nor reduce taxes over-all at first, but would lead to increased government revenues in future years.'

'We can't give away revenues.' Jesus. Tax money is their money, see?

Give it back to the people who earned it? NEVER! Cut taxes? NEVER! As to that crack about there never being such a thing as a temporary tax cut...how did the tax rates get so fucking high in the first place?

Pardon me, I've got to wipe my mouth--I tend to froth when I get onto taxes...and the Congressional mentality. Bloodsucking parasites!

## BOOK TITLE OF THE YEAR:

THANK GOD I HAVE CANCER  
BY REVEREND CLIFFORD ODEN

# We saw KING KONG a few days ago. The film went directly from the first-run house to the \$1. a seat houses, citywide.

Whatthehell, I enjoyed it. The satire was heavy-handed and clumsy, and I preferred Fay Wray to...to... I've forgotten her name already. But this Kong was a likeable, sentimental ape and the final scenes were as well done as the premise would allow. It was worth a buck. (It cost almost as much for a sundae at a Dairy Queen after the show.)

Very good special effects. As for the premises underlying the story: pure, romantic love victimized and destroyed by Man's Greed and Civilization's Cruelty; a monster ape will (presumably) eat/defile a black lass, but fall chastely in love with a white woman; and with the experience of the huge log game and the sprung tanker plates which Kong destroyed, the scientists put him in a bird cage for the great unveiling, and expected the cage to hold him. Yuk yuk. "Never mind, Dick, it's good symbolism, good chauvinism, and good theater."

## LETTER FROM EDWARD WOOD

### HOW HUGO GOT HIS HUGO

'The recent letter to SFR #20 by Fred Patten dated 26 Nov 76 brings to mind a time when world convention committees were not so circumscribed by rules and regulations that they were unable to do innovative things.

'The following event is related here because all the other participants are dead and like so many other unrecorded fannish events it will slip into oblivion since fannish historians will obviously have no idea that it occurred. It is part of what I choose to call the unrecorded history of fandom.

'The first special Hugo was awarded to Hugo Gernsback as "The father of magazine science fiction" at the 1960 World Convention held at Pittsburgh, Pa., nicknamed "Pittcon" by the attendees and its sponsoring members. There is an interesting story behind this special Hugo which the readers might enjoy.

'On a late 1959 trip back to Pittsburgh to visit Basil Wells' farm were Dirce Archer, her husband George who drove the car, P. Schuyler Miller and myself.

'Pittsburgh had beaten Ted White and the Washington group at the Deception for the 1960 World Convention site. This was the first of a number of defeats for fannish fans in regard to obtaining world conventions. We were discussing program ideas when Miller off-handedly mentioned that John Campbell had been talking to Hugo Gernsback and that the great man was unhappy that he had received no Hugo even though the award was nicknamed after him. I immediately seized upon this to say, "Great, let's give Hugo a Hugo!"

Dirce, who was the chairperson of Pittcon, was greatly annoyed and rejoined with a list of arguments and objections that took several hours of vigorous near-argument to overcome. "Why should we give Hugo a Hugo?" "It's too costly." "Why does he need one?" "Should we do it?" "Can we do it?" Etc., etc.

'Dirce had what I call cash register eyes; you could almost see her adding up the expenditures in one eye and the income in the other. Her aim was to keep the first as small as possible and the other as large as possible.

'In those days of a two dollar admission charge and with the memory of the financially disastrous World Convention of 1959 still fresh in the minds of most of fandom there was a great incentive to watch the pennies. In fact, it was common to find many conventions built around

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## ISSN: 0036-8377

## THE ALIEN CRITIC

SCIENCE FICTION REVIEW

Available in microform from:

OXFORD MICROFORM PUBLICATIONS LTD  
Wheatheaf Yard, Blue Boar Street  
Oxford OX1 4EY

Science Fiction Review is published  
at 1525 NE Ainsworth, Portland, OR  
97211

NO ADVERTISING WILL BE ACCEPTED  
Second Class Postage Paid  
at Portland, OR 97208

RICHARD E. GEIS, EDITOR & PUBLISHER

PUBLISHED QUARTERLY  
FEB - MAY - AUG - NOV

SINGLE COPY --- \$1.50

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the auctions the authors would remain solvent. This did not always result in the best programming for the attendees. This should indicate to the readers that some of Dirce's arguments were not without merit considering the times.

"Miller, while approving of my idea, took an essentially neutral stance as was his nature. I stubbornly countered Dirce's objections one by one, time after time. "I think Hugo Gernsback is one of the great figures of science fiction and fandom. Consider all the magazines he did start. Look at the Science Fiction League. Would our fandom of today [1959-1960] be what it is without Hugo starting various readers' letter departments in his magazines? How about the many contests he held to stimulate interest in science fiction? Goddamnit, only Campbell has done more for the field, and even that's a debatable point! Hugos aren't made of platinum, so how costly are they? Maybe the neofans can be conned into thinking Hugos are extremely expensive but you and I know better. Let's just order another one from Ben Jason."

'(Ben Jason had been supplying Hugos for various conventions since the 1955 Cleveland World Convention which had picked up the award originated by Philcon II in 1953 and dropped by San Francisco in 1954. Ben has been one of the unsung heroes of fandom and when is some convention going to get smart and make Ben a fan Guest of Honor?)

'During these arguments Dirce made much of the point that Gernsback was very close with a dollar and had not paid some authors and illustrators during the 30's. I countered that being close with a dollar was for her like the pot calling the kettle black.

'During all this talk we argued that a convention committee was obligated only to put on a convention. It could literally do anything else it wished. But fanish customs and traditions had a strong hold on the minds of the Pittcon committee, and they did not arbitrarily raise the registration fee for Pittcon, but at Pittcon asked for the members' permission to increase the fee by \$1 for the benefit of the 1961 World Convention and all succeeding world conventions. A pity that some other convention committees haven't been so considerate.

'After arguing to the point of exhaustion, Dirce finally snatched defeat from the jaws of victory by saying, "Next you'll want us to give Ben Jason an award!"

"Splendid idea," I answered. "Let's give Ben an inscribed plaque!" Miller also thought highly of the suggestion. However I really thought

that Dirce, who, dripping nuder never weighed more than 100 pounds, was about to toss my 250 pound bulk bodily from the speeding auto as she screamed, "Ed Wood, you're impossible!"

'However the fuming and furious Dirce, realizing that now she might have to worry about two awards rather than one, conceded that Pittcon might just be able to scrimp up the money from its limited resources to get Hugo his Hugo.

'And that's the way it was.

'PS: I sincerely believe that awards should bring honor both to the awardee and the awarder. Awards given with a free and lavish hand soon become a joke. The science fiction/fantasy field has proliferated awards to such an extent that if continued the awards will outnumber the available awardees. An award that means only a few dollars more when announced in a book or magazine is no longer an award of merit. If our field is heading in this direction, anyone desiring an award should go to the nearest trophy store and buy The Grand Order of the Purple Shaft and place it in the appropriate site of honor.'

4-26-77 There is talk, more and more often, in the papers and magazines, of the obsolescence of the penny. Soon, it is said, the cost of making a penny will exceed its value, and the mint will be losing money on each red cent it mints. Not that losing money on an operation ever bothered a politician if it was in his interest.

But the necessity for the penny is gone, given the steadily decreasing value of the dollar. Prices could easily be rounded off at the nearest  $\frac{5}{8}$  mark.

I am of course concerned with what this would do to postal rates. And I wonder if the postal service has considered this aspect of their rate schedules for the future. Probably withing six years the penny will be gone, and it would not do for the postal service to still have (say) 17¢ postage stamps for first class mail, and 22¢ second class transient rates, and 27¢ third class rates, and 31¢ airmail rates to foreign countries...

I suppose they'll all be ending in 5 or zero soon. It would make things simpler, having to keep only two kinds of stamps on hand--10s and fives (with an option of 20s).

But I know in my heart that simplicity is against the grain in government, especially the postal service, so I'm confident they'll manage to screw things up. Perhaps they'll insist on making 2-1/2¢ stamps avail-

able and only sell them 2 for 5¢, thus making it possible to set 17-1/2¢ rates and making it necessary for everyone to stick on that extra stamp, thereby causing untold loss of time and untold further anger at bureaucratic idiocy.

# Jimmy Carter has of course come forward with his Energy Plan, and has said in his peculiar halting cadence of words, that he wants to tax oil and gas heavily, and then give rebates to everybody so it won't hurt so much after all. And tax the gas-guzzlers...

And create, of necessity, another vast army of government employees whose jobs would be to collect the taxes, enforce the taxes, give the rebates...paper, paper, paper...

THIS CHANGE ORDER RESCINDS THE PREVIOUS CHANGE ORDER, WHICH WAS CLARIFICATION OF POLICY, BUT NOT ANY SUBSTANTIAL CHANGE. WE STILL DON'T WANT ANY CHANGES, BUT THE POLICY IS SO BAD WE DON'T WANT IT CLARIFIED, EITHER. IS THAT CLEAR?



He has not, of course, run any cost studies to find out how much energy it will cost to do all this taxing and rebating.

Congress will probably give him the taxes on crude oil and gas, and give him the extra controls he wants on the energy of the country. The gas tax at the pump is, I suspect, something to yield in order to get what he and his Energy Czar and the Real Bosses want.

I hear a lot of howling by everyone concerned in this energy plan except---except the Big oil companies: Exxon, Standard Oil, Shell... They have their agents in the carbid seats in government and can have the rates and controls applied to suit their needs, which will be to help drive out what little competition still exists, and to ensure ever-greater profits.

# An FDA spokesman tried to poo-poo the criticism of the Canadian tests which were used to prove Sac-



charin could cause cancer. He said after all, this talk of 800 no-cal soft drinks per day is misleading. He said they only gave the rats saccharin equal to 5% of their diet.

But his statement is misleading. 5% of an average human's diet is about 1-1/2 ounces. One and one-half ounces of saccharin comes to about 500 1/2 grain tablets, and each 1/2 grain tablet will sweeten one cup of coffee very nicely. So. The tests are still unrealistic. Why didn't they give the rats the equivalent of say ten saccharin-sweetened soft drinks per day for the rats' lives? Because they knew bloody well they couldn't cause cancer that way.

And at that they only got cancer in three out of five of the rats!

# Surgeons are now able to create a remarkably realistic-looking sex-change for those persons who wish sex-change operations to the male gender. They use a shaped groin skin flap, take tucks to form a glans, and 'tactile sensations were also achieved by moving the clitoris, much enlarged by hormone treatment, and placing it at the exterior base of the penis.' As in earlier procedures, a scrotum and artificial testes are constructed. The hormone treatments take four years, and the penis-construction takes nine months.

4-18-77 I am pissed off today. I just had to call a plumber to have him come and ream out the basement drain pipe from the kitchen to the main sewer outlet which runs under thirty feet or so of cement floor. This happens every four years or so. I still hate to kiss a minimum of \$22.00 goodbye.

I am also still grinding my teeth and tossing and fretting in my sleep about the monstrous tax bill I had to pay last week. I seriously underestimated my quarterly payments and forgot again that as a self-employed person I am penalized by having to pay both sides of the Social Security tax. That S.S. tax, by the way, now is 33% larger than the federal tax bill I pay. What it comes down to is that I paid in enough for the federal taxes, but not any on the Social Security tax. Then there was the state tax...the Portland business licence for 1977, the new Multnomah County business tax... Oh, ARRRRRRRGHHHHHHHHH!! PLUS, PLUS the first quarterly estimated income tax payment that had to go in with the federal tax by April 15. I had to dip deeply into savings. At this rate of loss I won't be able to afford to publish & make a profit.

Think I'm kidding? What is the basic rate on earnings over \$2100.?

about 27% for me, people. Plus hidden taxes on the price of everything I buy. So I have to figure that for every five dollars I earn, almost \$1.50 is tax. And since I have to have at least \$300. per month to live this bare-bones existence...

EH! Hell with it. I won't moan in your face anymore. I'll just say the plumber was here an hour ago and he charged \$26. And as a bonus I learned there is a busted pipe under the cement near the furnace which sooner or later will have to be replaced, at ruinous cost, of course. Happy new year. And tonight President Carter tells us all about the energy crisis.

4-19-77 Yes, The Peanut that talks like Standard Oil told us last evening we must cut down on energy use, especially oil use.

Only thing is, the oil companies are at this moment pressuring their dealers to sell more and more gas! The dealers have increased sell quotas. They are threatened with loss of dealership if enough gas isn't moved.

And there is a statistic Mr. Peanut didn't use last night. It is estimated that cars and trucks use 18% of the oil used yearly by this country. Cutting 10% of that 18% isn't going to save all that much oil.

Well, then, where could we cut significantly? Well, we could do away with 50% of the plastics industry... Most of what is made from plastics could be made from glass, ceramics and wood. A lot of the chemical-made-from-oil soil additives could be replaced with manure of various origin... Save your shit for the farms, folks.

Anyway, not to worry very soon. Congress, under pressure from the auto and auto-related industries and the affected unions will lobby the guts out of whatever measures Carter wants. And I suspect this is expected. This whole ballyhoo is probably just a justification for deregulating and/or taxing oil and natural gas, and permitting the oil and gas companies and coal companies to raise their prices ever more, ever more, which thereby makes their existing reserves worth double or triple what they are now.

The OPEC countries may not increase the base price of crude again this June, but will probably next year...thereby making an increase in domestic oil prices on existing reserves legal. See how the major oil companies have a stake in letting OPEC have their price increases?

4-27-77 The International Monetary Fund lent debt-ridden Zaire another 85 million \$. The public reason is to tide the country over until it runs the rebels out of its copper-mining province and gets production back to normal. The real reason is that a group of U.S. banks, headed by Citibank (Rockefeller) is into Zaire's massive debt structure very heavily with loans, and this IMF loan is to make some repayment possible to those banks. But Zaire was on the verge of bankruptcy even before the Shaba province fighting began, and this loan is simply a holding operation, a further staving off of the inevitable.

Who funds these bank-saving loans by the IMF? The U.S. treasury, mostly. Who pays those treasury loans, in the end? You do, and me do.

This ripoff comes to you courtesy the U.S. Congress, who voted those gifts to the IMF.

# On the Geis self-sufficiency front: The Anjou pear trees are producing myriads of tiny pears (what was needed was the second Anjou as companion to the first, to encourage the first tree to bear), but the peach tree has, for the second year, failed to pollinate. I have concluded I planted a variety (forgot which type, now) which needs a companion, also, to bear. The peach tree in the backyard next door is self-pollinating and no help at all. So-what to do with the mother? At first outrage a few days ago I thought of killing it! Off with its trunk! Out with its roots! Who needs a barren peach tree year after year, getting bigger and bigger, a constant reminder of failure and frustration? But then I realized it was growing by three or four feet a year...and in a few years would provide a respectable amount of firewood if needed. Why not just let it grow and look upon it as an insurance policy for the energy crisis? So shall it be.

The strawberry plants have zillions of blossoms. The corn is coming up, the beets are beautiful, the potatoes are toting the mark, the cabbage is coming, the apricots are appreciated, the lettuce is luscious, and the carrots are...slow. Dumb vegetable. The apple tree is struggling with the remainder of the root system of the (I forgot what it was) tree I cut down two years ago, and has but a few blossoms.

I will this summer tear down the useless, decrepit, rotting, former greenhouse my step-father built (badly) in the Sixties behind the garage and with the usable lumber make a large woodshed and if possible a smaller, better located greenhouse. My goal is enough woodshed room to hold about 500 more Presto Logs plus whatever scrap wood I can scrounge.

I'll keep another 500 logs in the garage, plus other kindling-type wood. Heating oil will be going up again (with or without Carter's Energy Taxes) and I anticipate a gallon will cost around 50¢ before another year is gone. Four or five years ago it was 17¢.



"THE MOST SERIOUS PROBLEM WE FACE TODAY IS THE DEBASEMENT OF OUR CURRENCY BY THE GOVERNMENT. THE DOLLAR HAS BEEN DEBASED SOMEWHERE BETWEEN 76% AND 92% SINCE 1940... THE GOVERNMENT WILL CONTINUE TO DEBASE THE DOLLAR UNTIL IT IS WORTH ABOUT A NICKEL. (THEN IT) WILL REPUDIATE ITS DEBTS BY EXCHANGING 10 TO 20 OLD DOLLARS FOR EACH NEW DOLLAR."

"I KNOW OF NO EXAMPLE IN HISTORY WHERE ANY GOVERNMENT HAS EVER REPAYED ITS DEBTS IN THE PURCHASING POWER IN WHICH THE INNOCENT BOUGHT ITS BONDS ... GOVERNMENT BONDS ARE CERTIFICATES OF GUARANTEED CONFISCATION."

---DR. FRANZ PICK

I couldn't resist those quotes. Speaking of quotes, I have a couple letters about science fiction to print here. First, A LETTER FROM GEORGE WARREN:

April 12, 1977

"I have just read 25 mass market paperbacks for review (not a single sf book among them) and Jesus Christ, what a lot of shit all in all. There was one good piece of hackwork---a spinoff novelization by somebody named Graves who ought to be writing good cliffhanging blood-and-thunder sf instead of spinoffs of other people's bum ideas.

"There was one good first novel (HAULIN'), by Phil Finch, a book about long-distance trucking). Otherwise I have never read such gunk in my life. Even Vidal's 187¢ palled, and so did a Hammond Innes. (Vidal's Serious Novels are garbage but his Trivia and Trash is superb. He wrote

three of the best mystery novels of the Fifties under the name "Edgar Box," in about three or four days apiece, and despises them, but they're a hell of a lot better of their kind than his more ambitious stuff.)

"The novel outline you capsule in the March GALAXY ("The Alien Viewpoint" by Alter-Ego) is fascinating. Write it, you son of a bitch. I want to read it. And no, I do not want to read Everyday Science Fiction about Plain Old David Harumczwzspfk, Average Citizen of Gopher Prairieczwzspfk, and his microscopic ups and downs at all. Fuck him. I want to read about High Stakes and Derring-do when I read sf or I will not read sf at all. The sense of wonder is not dead. It's just that editors are buying bad stuff by bum writers, under the pressure of having to feed that machine that gobbles x number of titles per month whether you have a good one ready or not. At that, the littry level of even bad sf is better than that of the other genres for the most part although I would qualify that by saying there are a few really nice mystery writers out there.

"About the very interesting argument you and Alter are into, though, let us consider SHANE by Jack Schaefer, one of the finest Westerns ever written. It is about Average People into whose lives a Dangerous Badass wanders at precisely the time when High Stakes are under consideration. They react normally and averagely, and their reactions are described with uncommon maturity and skill.

(There is a sexual undertone in the book that is largely skimped in the otherwise excellent movie, and it is all the more effective [and all the more sexual] for being described, years after the fact, and in elliptical terms, by the kid Brandon De Wilde plays in the movie.) But the reason we zero in on them in the first place is the High Stakes. If they are not there -- if the alternative to Doing Something About It is something less less momentous than the destruction of the meager living of the Average Family -- there is little there to interest us in those Average People. As it is, with the real ---and sufficiently galactic for our present purposes -- threat hanging over them and forcing their reactions we come to care enormously about them and for them. Hmmm. Problemsolving stories again. But you know sf was never exclusively galactic about its high stakes anyhow. The Galaxy is not at stake in "Blowups Happen." Or in "Green Hills of Earth." Or in any one of many JWC-style problem stories. I suspect that what we are talking about here is not the size of the stakes but the tiredness of the writing. The

point I tried to make a couple years ago was that look at the unpromising, tired-out material Bester stole for those two Fifties books (THE DEMOLISHED MAN was of course CRIME AND PUNISHMENT, THE STARS MY DESTINATION was of course THE COUNT OF MONTE CRISTO, and these are two of the most tired-out plots in the world, having been rewritten twice a week for the B movies for 25-30 years), and all it takes is fresh writing. CITIZEN OF THE GALAXY is of course KIM and DOUBLE STAR is a version of PRISONER OF ZENDA in which, for an Old Switchover, Rassen-dyll gets the girl. Fresh writing again. There ain't any manual to follow. You just have to be yourself, and Yourself has to have something to say."

Alter's point was that too many writers (of sf novels) up the stakes in order to rivet reader interest. Thus the fate of mankind rides on what the hero does. Almost always. And it's boring after a few years.

In SHANE the livelihood of one family was at stake. The author didn't make the fate of the state or the fate of the country depend on what happened. Westerns are personal, local, at most regional morality tales. Alter and I would like to see more novels written (and published!) which are of similar small scale but of equal intensity and importance. A homeowner fighting aliens in the forests of Earth for his land and freedom...fighting a local alien occupation force. And winning. They conclude the costs are too high to kill him and his family and/or friends. They worry that other humans may also decide to pay the high price for freedom, but know that most humans will just go along.... The aliens can suffer a few "die-hards" to exist...they think.

The point is most sf writers may feel insecure and vulnerable if they don't take the easy way of Ultimate Stakes.

Of course sf short stories are almost always low-stakes stories. Not enough room to develop a high stakes plot.

4-29-77 The cat slipped out of the bag in the paper this morning. No doubt you remember the big TV news story of how the Federal Energy Administration charged 20 major multinational oil companies with overcharging U.S. consumers \$336 million between October 1973 and May 1975. The FEA said the companies had their foreign subsidiaries charge their U.S. companies excessive prices for oil, and these inflated costs were passed on to the public.

This got headlines and seems to show that the government is NOT dominated by big business, right? There goes the Rockefeller conspiracy theory down the toilet, right?

Wrong.

This will be in court for years. And the last paragraph of the New York Times News Service story is the kicker:

'Most observers agree the issues involved in the alleged overcharging will become moot if President Carter's energy program is enacted. This is because the government's interest in transfer prices is expected to end along with remaining price controls (on gasoline and aviation fuel) and along with the entitlements program, which is designed to equalize the costs of domestic and imported oil.'

There you go. This big story is all public relations. Propaganda. When Carter's energy bill (at least that part the Rockefellers want) is passed (after the Congress "protects" the public by tossing out the gas tax) the multinational oil companies will be able to charge themselves any price they want, and up the price of gas and heating oil anytime they want. But they won't be too obviously or outrageously greedy. They'll let the OPEC nations take all the blame for forcing oil and gas prices up.

#### LETTER FROM JOHN SHIRLEY:

4-9-77

'Your reply to my last letter ((SPR 18)) was nicely done, your rapier is sharp as ever. Your parody of new-wave-pretentiousness-self-indulgent-writing-styles was funny and authentic. So authentic that I thought: "Geis is missing his true vocation. He should cash in by writing new-wave-pretentious-self-indulgent SF!" But then, no one makes any money writing that way. Just ask Sallis.'

'What I am writing you about: I want to disclaim and denounce a printer's (or computer-typesetter's) error in my story appearing in NEW DIMENSIONS 7. See, this is the best of my stories to appear (better have been sold, but it takes SO GODDAMN LONG for them to manifest in corporeal form, to incarnate in earthly body---print) thus far, being the work closest to my instinctive conception, and I desire it be given every opportunity to have its say. Maybe it'll seem a minor thing to you, but to me---well, on page 134 of "The Almost Empty Rooms" the first line is 'She climbed the stepladder which she placed by the four strings.' In context that line is nonsensical, since that information already appears in the prior sentence, and in

the sentence following. I didn't write that line. It's their error, not mine. I resent it. I mean, it's normal for the typesetter to inject a word accidentally, or remove one, or wrongly drop a letter or two---that I can live with. But injecting an entire sentence---! In terms of storyflow that line is a moronic redundancy (you'll see what I mean if you read it) and makes the author look like a jackass. I don't look at all like a jackass although I do look rather like an eohippus.

'Of course, there are a few awkward sentences in the story for which I am responsible for...O'Writes 'O' De Woild, doesn't it just pain you when you see a mistake in print which you are responsible for, a glaring error on your part which an amateurish-meat-head should have known to remove long before the story got to the editor? And don't you curse yourself and think: "Here, in print forever, immortalized in a book, in black and white, is a pernenent monument to my stupidity."

'But that line on 134...She Not Mine.

'Oh, and also, at least in the hardcover copy I have, Silverberg's bioblurb intro to my story appears twice; it introduces my story and Gordon Ecklund's story. Ecklund's doesn't appear at all. Ecklund must be pissed off, and I don't blame him.'

It was a typesetter's error, sure, but it was careless proofreading which let it get through the galleys, and for that blame Bob Silverberg and/or Harper & Row.

I imagine the damage can be rectified in the paperback edition.

Now, from London, a LETTER FROM CHRIS EVANS:

18 March 1977

'SPR has more or less confirmed my belief that the American sf field is basically conservative, dominated by the reactionary elite of the SFWA. I was astonished to read of their decision to render stories appearing in AMAZING and FANTASTIC ineligible as a criterion for membership of the organization. It has an arbitrariness and finality about it that I find objectionable.'

The edict was one by the officers, not the membership, who were not consulted. And in SFWA nothing is really final, since a new President can reverse the ruling, or the membership can undo it if it wishes.

'In my opinion, it would be far better if the SFWA was replaced or subsumed in an international organization of writers (if, indeed, it is necessary to have such a body) and that the criterion for membership

was based on the quality of the work which an author produces, not on where it appears. It always seems to me that as a body the SFWA is far too insular, an embodiment of the unspoken belief that outside the U.S. there is no sf being produced which is worthy of its attention. The situation here in Britain is far healthier in this respect, with no corresponding peer group to pressurize beginning writers into conformity via subtle methods of censorship and discrimination (that should raise a few hackles).'

Well, Chris, the name is the Science Fiction Writers of America, not of Earth, so you cannot condemn SFWA for being what it is supposed to be. And I don't think you can prove that assertion that SFWA feels there is no sf produced overseas worthy of attention. Except for a dislike for Stanislaw Lem the man I think most SFWAns and others in the sf community have great respect and some specific admiration for some of the European, Australian, Japanese, and especially English writers.

Every group 'pressurises' beginners into conformity. It is automatic and probably necessary. One man's propaganda is another man's eternal verities.

A SHITHEAD IS A SHITHEAD, EVEN IF HE CALLS HIMSELF A KAKOEPHALIC GENIUS.



'Of course, it's not only the writers who exert pressure, but the fans, too. This is fair enough, since these are the people who ultimately support the authors. But sometimes I sense a kind of xenophobia about their response to certain writers, the "I-don't-like-what-you-write-you-bastard" syndrome. I'm thinking of course of Barry Malzberg and the frenzies of loathing which his work has evoked. I find your own position in this matter admirable. I can fully appreciate that people will dislike Malzberg's work;

# AN INTERVIEW

## WITH JOHN VARLEY

[The interview was conducted the evening of January 10, 1977, at John Varley's home in Eugene, OR. There Mr. Varley lives with his wife Annette, their three sons, a dog, a cat, and Raspberry, a possum. John was getting ready at the time of the interview for a trip to PhilCon, where he was to speak. From there he travelled to N.Y. to talk to publishers about his latest novel. This is the novel referred to in the last part of the interview. His first to be published is the OPHIUCHI HOTLINE.]

SFR: First off, could we have some biographical info?

VARLEY: I was born and grew up in Texas, lived there until I was ready for college, and went to Michigan State. I flunked out, went on the road, bummed around Southern California and Tucson for awhile, ended up in San Francisco, and stayed there for about nine years. I've been here for about two years.

SFR: Anything in particular bring you here?

VARLEY: Yeah. San Francisco was a very bad place to bring up kids, and we've got three. We had friends up here, and it looked like a nice small town, so we moved to Oregon.

SFR: Is this a good place for a writer?

VARLEY: Well, it's certainly gotten good since last year when Damon Knight and Kate Wilhelm moved here. There are at least three or four other writers who have sold who live in the area, and then a lot of others who want to sell. I knew that Ken Kesey was in this area when we moved up here. We've had some contact with him, actually.

SFR: Of what nature?

VARLEY: When my son brought home a baby possum, we didn't know how to feed it, and someone told us that Ken Kesey knew about possums. Actually, it was his brother that knew about it. But Annette called Kesey up, and he referred us to his brother, who told us how to take care of possum.



Photo Credit: DAMON KNIGHT

SFR: How did you get started in writing?

VARLEY: That must have been around 1972. We just were in a very bad financial situation, trying to think of ways to make money, and I decided that I could probably write some science fiction (I had been reading it long enough). And, of course, it wasn't any kind of immediate way out of our financial difficulties, but we were very fed up with being continually poor. Up to then, I had just been bumming around, not really doing much of anything (nothing with any kind of career orientation), so I started thinking about becoming a writer.

About that time I read an editorial in ANALOG by Heinlein, which had a great influence on me. I don't believe it any more, but the editorial said that although you have the urge to write, most people don't. They say, "I'd like to sit down and write," and they never do. So first off, you have to write. Second, you have to finish what you write.

Third, you have to mail it in; and fourth, you have to keep mailing it in.

So I just decided, "Well, I'll start writing, and I'll follow those rules." And he said that it just couldn't fail, that you'd have to sell. And I guess I wasn't as disillusioned with Heinlein then as I am now.

SFR: If you ran across that editorial now, you'd be a little skeptical?

VARLEY: Well, from personal experience I guess I wouldn't have any reason to be. I've met a lot of other people since then who want to write that I don't think can sell. I've read some things from Damon Knight's slush pile that... I don't think that these people are ever going to be able to write. And I don't know why, but they just don't seem to have any skill at telling a story.

SFR: Did you have any training in writing?

VARLEY: Nothing. I started out in college as a physics major. I had always been told that I was going to be very successful at whatever I wanted to do, and what I liked was science, so I thought I'd be a scientist. I never really questioned...



I never really stopped to think about, "What does a scientist do?" I'd wanted to be an astronomer, and I visualized astronomers as looking through telescopes all the time. Of course, they spend very little of their time looking through telescopes. Even when they're actually observing, it's a photographic plate, and it's just not very exciting. And I ran right up against chemistry, and was having to work for my grades, which I had never had to work for before.

I decided, "Well, I like films and I like science fiction, so why don't I switch over?", and I became an English major, and dropped out shortly after that, because they had absolutely nothing to offer...zero.

SFR: Would you advise a younger writer to take the route that you took?

VARLEY: If I had any advice, I would advise people to write what they like. I hate to say, "Write science fiction for money," or, "Write anything for money," 'cause it's so easy to... there are markets that you can sell to that don't require much in the way of writing skills, and you can get bogged down into that pretty quickly. Some people would say that science fiction is one of those markets, and it's true that you can sell some stuff to science fiction that you couldn't sell otherwise, with your level of writing skills. I've seen so many writers lately -- younger than me in most cases -- and they all are getting into...what can I call it? "New Wave" is such a dated term, but they are writing things that are...I suspect that in most cases, they're not the kind of thing they'd really like to read.

I'm not sure of this. Maybe this is exactly what they like to read. I'm sure some of them are writing exactly what they like to read, and it's just not what I like to read. But there are others, I think, who think that writing a story is selling themselves out in some way, and I've never quite been able to understand that. If you want to be a writer, you've gotta bear in mind that you've gotta sell, and then you've gotta strike a balance between making yourself a great literary reputation, and making a living. I think it's possible to do that; at least it's been possible for me to write what I want to write and sell it. I don't know if I'm looking at that from a privileged position, or if I'm just lucky that what I like to write is the kind of story that is selling well in science fiction. I really don't know.

SFR: But if someone were to sit down at the typewriter with the idea of, "What's a story I've always want-

ed to read and haven't run across?" Would that...

VARLEY: That's exactly what I thought when I sat down. There wasn't enough of the kind of thing I wanted to read. Aside from the profit motive -- sitting down there and deciding to try to make a living at writing science fiction -- I honestly wanted to see more stories of the kind that I like, and were just not being published. There were just a few writers, and of course they can't write enough to keep you reading all the time. I read an awful lot, and even if they'd bring out one story a month, there's a long dry space in between there. So I could fill that gap for myself.

I don't see what's wrong with starting out slowly, if you wish; deciding to sit down and write stories. Then, if you want to be... the example I've heard so much recently is Donald Bartholme. Why do they have to start out writing this sort of inaccessible stuff? Things that you know are never going to be tremendously popular with anything that approaches a mass audience, so that after working five years--very hard--at it, you can sell two or three stories a year to some very small literary magazine with 100 subscribers.

SFR: At a penny a word.

VARLEY: Yeah. Unless lightning really strikes, you're never going to make a living at it. I'm not saying making a living is the only reason to write by any means, but so many of the people I talk to say they want to be writers, and they do want to make a living at it, and they write this kind of thing that... there's just not room in the United States for that many writers of that kind of thing. There never will be.

SFR: Who are the people who come closest to writing the kind of thing that you haven't seen enough of?

VARLEY: Larry Niven, when he started out. The first few stories I read by Larry Niven I just enjoyed tremendously. I still enjoy most of his things, when he's really on the ball. Sometimes I get the feeling that he's devoted so much time and thought to his story and his plot, and the relentless logic of the damn thing, that he's just slighted the characters so much it's scandalous.

SFR: Does a workshop like the "Mini-Milford" held by Damon Knight and Kate Wilhelm every month help you in your writing? Would it have helped you in getting started?

VARLEY: I'm not not really sure it would have. In fact, part of me thinks that it might have hurt me, because I think my greatest asset when I started writing was the innocence, and not really knowing. No one had told me any kind of rules of how to put a story together, or what

So they know the environment around them is hostile, but they've managed to tame it enough that they don't have to think about it all the time. But there's a high technological base that's needed to support it.

SFR: In THE FUNHOUSE EFFECT, you appeared to be hinting at the invaders. Are you planning on coming out with something concentrating on the Occupation?

VARLEY: Well, when I started writing, the very first thing I wrote, because it was the first idea I'd had, was a novel that dealt with the invasion of the earth, and it's a bad novel. I submitted it several places, and it got rejected, and I decided that, although the story is needed for the future history series, it's never going to be published in it's present form. It's possible that someday I'll come back and rewrite it, but rewriting is such a drag for me that I just don't know if I'd ever get around to it.



The novel that's coming out in March or April, THE OPHIOCHI HOTLINE, deals with the second phase of the invasion, where the invaders are beginning to take notice of the humans in the solar system again. I probably shouldn't say much more beyond that. There's going to be more trouble, though. The expulsion of humanity is not complete. They're going to have to learn to live between the stars. I don't know if there are any more stories beyond that, because it would take such a radical change to humanity to do it to survive between the stars.

I know other writers have dealt with it, but I haven't been able to think of a new angle, and unless I can, I'm not interested in rewriting other people's stories that way. You never come up with something completely different, you always draw on what other people have done, but the more different, the better.

SFR: You've been reading sf all your life?

VARLEY: Since I was about twelve. I've got some rather strange gaps in what I've read. There are some authors that I've read almost nothing by; some very surprising writers that you wouldn't think that someone who was a science fiction fan has never read anything by this writer. The biggest example I can think of is Poul Anderson. I may have read just two or three of his short stories, but for some reason I've never been able to get into any of his novels. Anyway, I think I'm generally aware of what he's done, by reading synopses of his stories.

SFR: So, then, would you want people to remember or differentiate a John Varley story because of the style, or the idea, or both?

VARLEY: Well, both, but I think right now that I have to depend on the idea, because my style is not what it could be. That's what I'm working on now. I'm aware of problems of awkward narrative. It's not as fluid or graceful as I would like it to be. A few things I've written satisfy me completely, but not very many.

SFR: That's unusual, because the talk I hear from people about you has been unanimously centered on style. From John Shirley, for instance.

VARLEY: In the last letter he wrote me, he (John Shirley) seemed to feel, as I do, that I have some awkwardness in the narrative, anyway. He was talking about GOTTA SING, GOTTA DANCE to me, in a letter to GALAXY, and he was impressed with the way I had fused several elements that really seemed to go together. I actually hadn't been aware of it until I

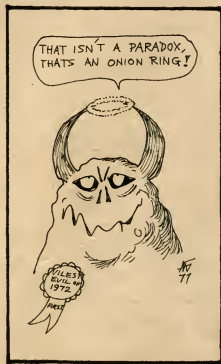
looked back and thought about some of it, and said, "Well, maybe it was. It was an interesting fusion." But it's just sort of the way it came out.

I don't have a great deal of control over some of the things that I write...

SFR: Not as much as you'd like?

VARLEY: No. I'm still experimenting with that, because I think there is a value in spontaneity. I think I should also allow... I think I'm fairly good at telling a story, from beginning to end, in an interesting way. But that doesn't come up to what I hope to do.

SFR: A common thread I see in your stories is a morality, for lack of a better word, that I can't remember



finding in a lot of other people's work.

VARLEY: I couldn't write -- if I wanted to -- the kind of thing where the heroine sits back and screams. What I was interested in writing, when I started out, was adventure stories without the load of crap that's always doled into them; from the very start, I guess.

I want everyone in the stories to be a participant. And as far as the male and female business goes, in most of the stories (in the connected future, anyway), male and female is an arbitrary choice that people make at different times in their lives. Changing sex is easy, completely accepted, and something that just about everybody does.

There is only a small minority of people who elect to stay in one sex for most of their lives. So when you read any of my stories in this future history, you've gotta bear in mind that the female character has been male before, and the male character has been female. You're going to see that this is a strong female character.

I've wondered if that's cheating. In a way, it's ducking issues of feminism, which I want to confront, but I don't feel that I'm politically sophisticated enough in so many ways to confront certain things. I'm learning things as I go along in my writing, working out my feelings about things. So I thought, as far as the question of feminism goes, what would people be like if they could change; see it from both sides, so that the person's sex was not an overriding issue in their lives.

I enjoy seeing females in positions where they have to take action, and when I put any character into a position like that, I try to make them as awkward, and just as unprepared for it as I think they would be in real life, male or female.

And it's nice to have them come through it okay; to do the right thing, even if it's by accident, or on the third or fourth try. I hate to call it "happy ending", but I know my stories have what you'd call a "happy ending". I find it hard to kill characters, for one thing. I like them too much, and I'm not too interested in telling stories where everyone is defeated. In the future history series, there is a gigantic defeat that precedes the whole thing -- the defeat for the whole race -- but I've tried with the people in the stories to draw a positive feeling out of it.

The reason the planet was taken away from human beings was because the invaders came to Earth to contact the intelligent beings who live on the earth, which are dolphins, sperm whales and orcas. The humans were fouling the environment so badly that they just had to be exterminated.

I don't hold with the view of human beings being Lords of Creation. I've never liked stories where humans sweep everything out of their paths so they conquer the galaxy. I've never believed it's going to be that way if we do get to the stars. I'm not sure what it's going to be, but I don't think it's going to be that.

SFR: How do you build your stories? On an innovation or trick of the future?

VARLEY: No, not so far. My stories

seem to begin with a picture that I see that may be rather strange, and then I have to justify that picture, and think of what sort of technological devices would be needed to make that picture work. Like, I was thinking of people living on the planet Mercury, just because Mercury was an interesting planet, because it's so close to the sun. And I was fascinated with the rotation rate (how the days work). But I didn't want my people in these stories to be...for their existence to be difficult in any way. I want it to be natural. They have no more trouble surviving in their world than we do in ours. So I had to think of several interesting dodges for that, such as the kind of suit that they wear in the story on Mercury; a space suit which takes virtually no maintenance, and very little attention. It appears around you when you need it, and disappears when you don't.

SFR: That puts you on the opposite end of the spectrum from Frank Herbert, who almost puts his characters in situations where survival is their main concern.

VARLEY: Well, the hostile environment is there. The majority of the stories I've written have been in a connected future where the Earth is occupied by invaders from a gas-giant planet. Not much has been said about them in the stories that have been published, and it's not possible to say much about them, except that they are just naturally our superiors. It's not a question of greater technological might, or anything like that, they're just constituted to be infinitely stronger and more powerful than we are. There's no chance of us ever reclaiming the earth from them. And they sit there on our home planet while the remnants of humanity are getting along fairly well on the other worlds of the system. But they're forever barred from going back to the earth.

SFR: There never seems to be conflict in your stories between Terrans and aliens.

VARLEY: Well, I don't like war stories that much. I've thought of several war story plots, and tried to make them into something different, and it usually just doesn't work. I wrote one war story which I don't like at all. I'd rather have conflicts other than that. I know that it exists, but I haven't thought of anything intelligent to say about it yet. Until I do, I don't think I really want to write about it.

SFR: Have you written non-fiction?

VARLEY: I've never done any non-fiction, and I'm really not interested

in it. I'm not really an authority on anything. My education is so general that there are very few subjects I can think of that I could sit down and write anything that would really tell people something that they need to know. I like to read non-fiction, although most of what I read is fiction.

SFR: Out of your 20 short stories so far, you sent most of them to ANALOG first?

VARLEY: No, I've sent about...I think it's a total of eight stories I've submitted to ANALOG.

SFR: And they've always bounced off to someone else?

VARLEY: Very quickly. They report very fast.

SFR: And why did you pick them first?



VARLEY: Because they pay well. I'm not that fond of ANALOG, issue by issue. I think every once in a while, he gets some stories that are very good, but Bova's month-to-month stories are pretty awful.

SFR: Why do you think none of your stories have been accepted at ANALOG so far?

VARLEY: Well, I've never asked him, but I've theorized that...I write in a hard science vein, without enough hard science knowledge to make it absolutely convincing to an engineer. I'm not sure. He may just not like my style; he may think my stories are no good. I haven't asked him, but he's not bought anything. They've all come back fairly quickly with what I originally thought was a nice letter which says, "Please try again," but I've since learned is a standard rejection slip.

I don't read all of the ANALOG

stories, but I usually sample a few, and so many of them seem to be set in a fairly near future, where things are still pretty tough. In space exploration, it's the original explorers who are so often going out in the ANALOG stories.

I wrote a story about Venus which is up for a Nebula this year, and it's another of my "hostile environments made simple", right? Where the people have no trouble surviving in this terrifically hostile environment. And I submitted it to Ben Bova, and he bounced it back very quickly. And within a couple of months, there was a story published by Brenda Pierce which took place on Venus, which was very engineering-oriented. The environment was definitely hostile, it was definitely trying to kill everyone all the time, and they were having a hard time of it. That seems to be the kind of adventure that he goes for.

My story was an adventure, but it's more low-key. The people are not having to really struggle against the environment, although they run into difficulties. It's a fairly unusual difficulty, because under normal circumstances, people don't have a great deal of trouble surviving on Venus (in this story).

SFR: All of your short stories have been SF?

VARLEY: Yeah. I've got a novel which I'm 100,000 words into which is not science fiction, but I don't know if I'll ever complete it. I'm working with a friend in Houston, and the project's kind of fallen off lately. I don't know we're ever going to finish it.

SFR: You're 100,000 words into it, and...

VARLEY: Yes, 100,000 words into it, and I'm probably about half way through it, but I know that most of the 100,000 words are going to have to be cut out. There are probably about 50,000 usable words there.

SFR: What about your day-to-day writing schedule?

VARLEY: Well, lately that's been kind of screwed up because of this trip to Philadelphia. I've been working on the maps, and the speech I'm going to deliver, and the novel synopsis. I have just a little bit on the novel right now (unfinished novel-in-progress). I'm kind of holding off on that to some degree, to -- hopefully -- get an advance; to try to sell it first.

SFR: You write from midnight to...?

VARLEY: To three or four a.m., if I'm doing good. Sometimes I sit in here instead; I can't drag myself to the typewriter, and things go badly.

SFR: Is that a writing schedule for every day of the week?

VARLEY: Just about every day. Every day that I'm home anyway.

SFR: Have you had any blocks so far?

VARLEY: No, not what I'd call a "block". I have day-to-day difficulties. I've been astounded at how easy it is to think up an excuse not to sit down at the typewriter. Some of them are very good excuses; things that have to be done around the house. Some of them are just totally insane. I sit here thinking, "Well, the end of this chapter," and I should have been up long ago, and I find I'm into the next chapter of the book I'm reading.

I've tried to find out why I do that, because once I get at the type writer, and get to moving, it's a whole lot of fun. I guess it's the period that I sometimes face, sitting down there, and looking at the paper for 30 minutes or so before I actually start. If I can once get over that hump, I can write fast, and enjoy it. I need more discipline, I know that.

SFR: Do you think your life style -- with a family -- hampers of helps your writing?

VARLEY: I don't think it hampers. I don't have any difficulty in finding time to sit down at the typewriter. I don't know exactly how it would help, except that the whole family... the idea of being in a family makes you feel more stable, I think. If I was trying to live on my own I'd very likely be so scattered I'd never sit down at a typewriter. I don't organize myself very well.

SFR: Do Annette and the kids remind or ask you about your writing?

VARLEY: Annette does, usually. She's awfully interested in what I'm into at the moment. The kids don't seem to be aware of it too much. They know I get a check every once in a while -- at very odd intervals -- and when they come, we live pretty well for a while. In the meantime, the explanation is always, "There's a check coming, and then you can get that. But not until then."

It's so irregular. We've come close to not having a penny, and always -- so far -- it's worked out that just when we need the money badly, it's come in. And I think things are going to get easier from now on.

I've been kind of amazed to discover that even with just 20 short stories and a novel sold, which is not a large number, you begin to get some income beyond that first sale.

I've sold an anthology now, and that was all money that eventually just seems to be for free: I didn't have to do any work for it. I'd already done the work, I'd already gotten money for it, and now I'm getting money for them again.

SFR: Who's publishing that?

VARLEY: QUANTAM. They're the same people who are doing the novel. It's a new company which hasn't published anything yet. My book's going to be the first one. They also have one from Gordon Dickson, and one from Greg Benford.

SFR: Is this strictly a science fiction company?

VARLEY: It's a cooperative venture -- I guess you'd call it -- between the Dial Press or James Wade Books and Dell (I'm not sure who is the owner and who is the owner in that situation, but I deal with Don Benson at James Wade Books). Dial will bring out the hardcover and Dell the paperback. And they also have contracts in foreign countries; 8 of them, I believe. Eight translations and the English rights are sold at the same time, and it's all one big package evidently.

SFR: Is your agent trying to sell anything of yours for film rights?

VARLEY: He hasn't mentioned anything about it, and I can't think that anything I've got is really adaptable to film, as they're doing it now. I'm really anxious to see George Lucas's STAR WARS, which is evidently very much science fiction; very much spaceships and off the earth. Most of the science fiction I've seen has been very Earth-bound, and in the near future, usually. Very badly done in most cases, too.

I've definitely got mixed reactions about... thinking about selling something to film, because if you just read a couple of paragraphs of Harlan Ellison, you get some idea of

what you're getting to see into there. I sometimes get a feeling that I'd rather not sell them anything except something I don't care about, so that I can just sit back and let them do whatever they want to it. If it was something I really liked, it'd be torture to see what they were doing to it.

I just saw that they've retitled DAMNATION ALLEY; THE LAST SOMETHING-OR-OTHER, I don't know what it was.

SFR: Have you tried to parlay your success so far into money in other things, like lecturing or writing articles about science fiction?

VARLEY: No. The only fringe benefit... well, I've had a few fringe benefits, I guess. The biggest one so far is this trip to Philadelphia, where I'm getting my airfare and my hotel paid. In return, I've got to give a speech, which terrifies me. So the lecture circuit is not something I'm ever planning to get onto. I don't enjoy speaking, and I've never believed that just because you can write, you can speak.

As far as writing articles about science fiction, it's not very likely for several reasons. I was trying to think of what I was going to speak on in Philadelphia. I ran through all these topics about science fiction, and they all sounded so dull. And I couldn't think of a thing in the world I could say about any one of them that was new. I don't want to talk about something that I can't add anything constructive to.

Of course, the first topic that comes up is, "What is science fiction?", and I have nothing to say about that.

SFR: You don't feel as comfortable as, say, Harlan Ellison, about opinionizing publicly?

VARLEY: No, I don't think I could do that. He evidently feels... he seems to have a lot of opinions on every-





thing. I have opinions, but they're changeable in a frighteningly short time sometimes and I would be just terrified of standing up in front of a group of people, saying, "This is the way something is," maybe completely forgetting that I had said that. And then, the next time I speak, saying "It's just the other way around." Because that happens to me sometimes. I'm constantly exploring what I think about things, and I very seldom get to an ironclad determination.

SFR: What authors do you admire most outside of science fiction?

VARLEY: I'm not that well-rounded outside of science fiction. For the last two years I've been reading thrillers, spy stories, and mysteries at a tremendous rate, because I had planned to write a thriller of the kind that I've read, where the whole world is threatened by a nuclear explosion, or something like that. Maybe if I read enough thrillers, I'd get an idea of the style that's needed. So read an awful lot of those, but seldom by the same author. I found a few authors I could read two books by, but most of the books were really dreadful.

SFR: Who were the people you could read more than one book of?

VARLEY: Someone named Brian Garfield who wrote DEATHWISH. He can tell a good story. A few of them were so damn bloody, I could hardly believe it. No matter what he was talking about, though, it seemed like I could go along with him for the purposes of the book.

Another is John LeCarre. He knocked me over with TINKER, TAILOR, SOLDIER, SPY. I really loved that book, and I went back and read several books by him. Who else? I read an Agatha Christie book recently, and then tried three or four others, and I think she's a lot of fun.

I don't read a whole lot of things outside of science fiction. Someday I hope to. About three or four years ago, I went on a "classics" kick. I realized that there were all these great books that I had not read, so I read a few of those. MOBY DICK and TOM JONES even. About 800 pages of very inaccessible prose -- inaccessible if you're trained to read the short style nowadays -- but I liked them. Several other things, too, like Mark Twain.

But it's the classic story of all these people that might be worth reading -- the classics you were told to read in school -- but I've never enjoyed any book I've been told to read. It's just impossible for me to do so. So, I went back to

a few of them and found out they were usually as good as I'd been told they were, which I'd never suspected.

SFR: The subject of thrillers brings up the point that I can't recall any of your stories' having any real violence. The threat of violence is there, but no bodies dropping left and right.

VARLEY: Yes, sometimes I like to read that kind of story, if it's handled well, but I've not been able to handle it well myself yet. This 100000-word, half-finished thriller has got a lot of violence in it, and most of those scenes are scenes that have failed pretty badly, because the characters who get the violence done to them are nobodies. I pick up these ideas of what to do in my fiction from places here and there, and one that I particularly remember was in RITE OF PASSAGE, where the female -- I don't recall her name right now -- was thinking about spear-carriers in drama: people who are there to die, or carry a spear, or some other minor function that moves the plot along. She realizes after she has just seen someone killed, that this person who had just come into her life very briefly, and died in front of her, was a spear carrier in her life, but not his life.

And I don't want to put any spear carriers in my books if I can help it. I wanted to have everybody be a real person, and I'm too soft on these real people. If I've created them, and I like them, I find it hard to do something really nasty to them. That may be a weakness. I've got to look into it, but I still don't like to...there's got to be a powerfully good reason for having some kind of violence happen.

SFR: In your stories, with the conflicts you choose, it's never necessary for someone to die for the conflict to be resolved. In BAGATELLE, for instance, it's only a matter of disarming the bomb rather than destroying an organic creature.

VARLEY: Right. I've had a lot of people tell me they like that story, which has surprised me to some degree. I didn't think it was one of my best stories, but I've reread it a couple of times, trying to see what they liked, and I was fairly satisfied with the way I built the tension up. I tried to underplay it. Like you say, the disarming of the bomb that was the most important thing, not a gigantic disaster where a bomb has gone off, and people are trying to clean up after it: the tensions that were preying on everyone's minds as they were attempting to disarm the bomb.

Something that I've noticed, and nobody else has ever told me about (I keep wondering why they don't), is that an awful lot of my stories deal with young people between the ages of 12 and 17, and crises that they run into as they're growing up. I've wondered why I do that. I'm not sure.

SFR: Would that fit in with your future history theory, where not only sex, but age is a matter of choice?

VARLEY: This is chronological age I'm talking about. If you're 100 years old, you can decide to look like you're nine, or you can decide to look like you're 50, but your mind is going to be that of a 100-year-old, or a nine-year-old, depending on how chronologically old you are.

A great number of my characters have been under 20, and I'm not sure why, except that, as I say, I always start a story from a picture, and most of these pictures that come in to my mind involve a child trying to deal with something which is awfully hard to deal with, and I get a story out of it pretty quickly. I get a story out of these kids I see a lot faster than I do if I see a picture of an adult trying to do something, because then the situation becomes more complicated, the issues become more complicated.

SFR: Would it be because, in a short story, you need to have the main character in a position of coming to grips with a new part of his life, and young people have so many new parts of life to come to grips with?

VARLEY: Yes. In a short story, you need one thing to happen, and it needs to be fairly clear-cut -- in most instances -- unless you're trying to write an atmosphere or mood piece, which frankly don't sell too well. And, like I say, I got into this for the money. I like what I'm doing, but I did get into it for the money, and I decided that I would write stories.

SFR: What about novels, then? Are they young people as well?

VARLEY: Well, in the one that I've sold, the main character is in her 50s, and most of the others around her are her age or older. And it deals with larger issues, with WORLDS IN COLLISION sort of thing, not the smaller, more personal issues although there is that within the larger issues of the novel.

SFR: Where then would your long-term goals be taking you?

VARLEY: More novels seems to be the thing. I can't write fast enough to survive on short stories. I like to publish short stories: they're not

as complicated to write. I had an awful time writing this last novel. I got myself involved in a plot that was, I think, too plotty: too many things going on, too many things that had to be tied up. And I began to worry about half way through it that I had a 150,000-word novel on my hands, which is kind of hefty for a first novel. It's, I think, 90,000 words as it stands now, and it's got some problems, but nothing gigantic.

SFR: Was in a novel there are more chances to write yourself into a corner?

VARLEY: Yeah, I think so. Another thing about writing short stories is that it uses up the ideas at a much faster rate. Not to say that I would turn all of the short story ideas into novels -- I don't think that's a good idea -- but the future history idea helps a lot in that you can use some of the ideas that you had before, in other stories, and expand on the society, and expand on the technology behind it, without feeling that you're being too derivative.

SFR: What about your writing schedule, between novels and short stories?

VARLEY: I'm working on one short story, and I've just finished a novel synopsis, which is possibly the first novel of what would become a series of novels. I'm thinking in terms of a series because this concept I've come up with is big enough to hold several novels.

SFR: Is this the novel you'll be taking to New York?

VARLEY: Yes, the synopsis, and maps of this gigantic living being (which they live in, as part of the novel).

SFR: Thank you, Mr. Varley.

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GOOD HEAVENS! MY NOSE IS COVERED WITH BARNACLES! WHAT WAS I DOING LAST NIGHT?



# MONOLOG CONTINUED FROM PAGE SEVEN

what I cannot understand is why they should want to drum him out of sf as a result. Surely there's enough room for everyone? No-one is forcing anyone to read Malberg's work - there are plenty of other writers around. Malberg has his faults - a repetitiveness of theme and a certain gleeful morbidity - but he's been a distinctive voice in sf, one to which I would always be prepared to listen, if not necessarily agree. There's no doubt in my mind that he can write well, and to call him a hack is patently ridiculous.

'On a lighter note, as a Welshman must take issue with Neal Wilgus for messing around with my ancestral tongue in his poem "A Planet Called Llantysiliogogoch." It should be Llantysiliogogoch. In fact, the full rendition is Llanfairpwllgwyngilgogerychwyndrobwillantysiliogogoch which means, as aficionados of THE GUINNESS BOOK OF RECORDS will be aware, "St. Mary's Church in the hollow by the white hazel, close to the rapid whirlpool by the red cave of St. Tysilio." So now you know.

'Finally, I thought Tim Kirk's illustration at the top of page 18 (SFR #20) was the cutest thing I've seen in ages.'

5-2-77 A man robbed a grocery store, here in Oregon, yesterday, and left a note: "Your prices are too high. How do you like being robbed?"

# We went to a few shows last week: THE SENTINAL, and NETWORK.

THE SENTINAL is just another more-absurd-than-usual supernatural horror film, of the old house and weird tenants variety. The actors did their best (including Burgess Meredith, whom I dote on) but the plot sickened and the ending absurd all over the screen. Obvious questions were never answered: Why do the Sentinals have to sit in that window all day and night? Why do they have to be blind? How do they in fact guard the gateway to Hell? Is their presence enough? Etc. Etc. Some good gore special effects, though. The R rating was due to the rather turn-off nudity and some tint of lesbianism by two of the "tenants" (dead sinners returned to drive the heroine insane, to drive her to suicide...) and an improbable rub-a-dub masturbation sequence by one of the lezzies.

NETWORK is very good satire on the TV industry which is portrayed as willing to do anything for rat-

ings and which is characterized as an evil, overpowering influence on the people, providing warped role models for its watchers... Sort of the pot calling the kettle sinfully black. Well acted, though I must say William Holden is getting too damn wrinkled to convince me he is a heart throb for women in their thirties.

I suspect Paddy Cheyevsky wrote this movie with a tongue in cheek, as mockery not only of TV but of the lucrative business of Viewing With Alarm. Peter Finch was delicious as the psychotic anchor man used to hype ratings by a failing network.

By changing a few words and names the same movie (for TV!) could be made to jape the movie industry...or the publishing industry....

# THE POSSESSED last night on NBC was a third cousin to THE EXORCIST. It may be a series next fall. A former priest fights evil wherever he finds it. In this TV-movie it was a demon-possessed headmistress of a large private school. Mysterious fires break out, a biology teacher is burned to death, some students narrowly escape burning... The final scene is well done, with Joan Hackett spewing nails (NAILS?!?) and foul fluid from her mouth at James Farentino (the evil-fighter) and then starting spontaneous fires on his coat. He jumps into the conveniently near swimming pool and is never seen again ("Who was that mysterious stranger?"), a doorway open at the other end of the natorium suggesting he simply left without a further word, having somehow drawn the demon from the lady and killed it in the suddenly flaming pool. (Or was he a ghost?)

Very ambiguous copout ending. Farentino played the ex-priest like a zombie.

# Here's a look behind the scenes of editing. A LETTER FROM KARL T. PFLOCK:

26 April 1977

'Had a nice chat with "Tiptree" yesterday (took her so long to call because she'd been in Mexico most of the month). But she says no to the interview. "I'm forceful on paper and on the phone," says she, "but in the flesh I'm like a cloud of dust going over the hill." Sigh. Shy.

'Couple of interesting things, though: She says one of the reasons she "came out of the closet" is that she's "pretty well finished with what I wanted to say as "Tiptree".' What was an early CIA employee, but left in 1952 to go back to the academic world. She's (or was) an anti-Vietnam War activist---having picket-

ed the White House and "frowned at Nixon," etc. She looks (says she) like "the typical mad suburban housewife." She's been married to the same guy for thirty years, and she was involved in the early satellite programs (no details on this). She likes David Bunch--his writing, that is.

'Oh, she sends you her regards and compliments on SFR.

'Here's something: "Tiptree" says that Jeff Smith is the only person in fandom who will "know 'Tiptree' in the flesh" for the foreseeable future. She says if you want to know anything about her, ask him.'

Thanks, Karl. For those who came in late: the Jan. 30th issue of LOCUS had a lead-off story saying that James Tiptree, Jr. was the pen-name of a woman, Alice Sheldon, 61, who has also written fiction under the name of Raconna Sheldon. I reported this in SFR #21, using LOCUS as the source.

Jeff Smith, a long-time fan, publishes an excellent sf fanzine, KHATRU, which often features a column by "Tiptree". KHATRU #6 has just been published, in fact, and has a long article on "Tiptree", and the "Tiptree" column, "The 20-Mile Zone", plus an editorial comment on the situation. #6 is \$1.25 a copy from Jeff Smith, 1339 Weldon Av., Baltimore, MD 21211.

5-3-77 An idle economic note: now Arthur F. Burns, head of the Federal Reserve (and, wouldn't you know, also, just coincidentally, a member of the Rockefeller's Council On Foreign Relations) has joined in to push the Carter Energy Plan before Congress.

Ronald Reagan, still a big power in the Republican party, said correctly over the weekend that the Carter Energy Plan isn't a conservation plan so much as it is a tax plan. NOW we know how Carter will balance the budget---not by cutting government, but by vastly increasing taxes.

# Yep. We watched THE SEARCH FOR NOAH'S ARK last night, and I was surprised that there had been so many sightings and reports of what might be the Ark on Mt. Ararat in Turkey.

Much was done to give a sheen of plausibility to the legend from the Bible...could such a craft float and be seaworthy? Could such a global flood have occurred, could Noah and his family care for two thousand sets of animals for a year...

One little consideration was left out.... One impossibility was ignored.... The Ark was said to be 450 feet long, 75 feet wide, and 75 feet

deep. And Noah and his sons were supposed to have built this ship singlehanded, with hand tools, using pegs in place of nails and spikes... hand-hewn planks and timbers... Three decks, a roof, innumerable compartments, stairs, halls....

It would, today, take an army of men years and years to build such a craft, and a fortune to finance it. How did Noah, a poor man, buy all that lumber, and supplies, and other equipment? Not a word was said.

## # LETTER FROM DAVID TRUESDALE

April 27, 1977

'I can't adequately express my heartfelt thanks for the gracious plugs you gave TANGENT, as well as the very pleasing manner in which you presented the Brackett/Hamilton interview. I'm just glad you thought the interview good enough that you'd want to show it to others, and that I was able to help. I hope your readership enjoys it, as much as I did while talking to Ed and Leigh, and writing it up for TANG. I, of course, met Ed only that once...and I still feel a sense of loss after these few empty months since his passing. I can imagine what E. Hoffman Price, Bradbury, Mr. Williamson, and of course Leigh, must be feeling, as well as yourself. I'd no idea Ed was such an influence on you as well, but I expect he touched our people's lives than even he imagined.'

It's said the golden age of science fiction is thirteen. Perhaps the early teens are also the most impressionable age.

But now, from Sunset Crest Drive in Los Angeles, right on schedule, A CARD FROM ROBERT BLOCH:

April 28, 1977

'Thank you for reprinting that Brackett-Hamilton interview from TANGENT! It captures both of them so well---principally, I suppose, because neither Leigh nor Ed could ever be accused of being anything anything but utterly natural and unpretentious. Consequently they come through as genuine in every quoted word. And, judging from a lot of what I've read lately, we're in some need of people who still retain a bit of modesty about themselves and their work, and a sense of humor. Incidentally, you may get corrections --- it's "Hawks" (without an e), and the writer who praised the pulps was the famed William Bolitho. A good thing for ego-trippers to remember: one day you're famous---the next day you're misspelled!

'Best, Robert Bloch'

Nobody takes pride in their work anymore.



Hubris deflation comes my way every few days as mail comes for Geiss, Gis, Gies....

A CAPSULE REVIEW OF BIG JAKE, A JOHN WAYNE MOVIE SHOWN ON TV, MAY 4:

"IT JUST HAD A PLOT TO HOLD THE SHOOTING TOGETHER,

---ELSIE

5-6-77 I've always suspected this: NBC radio has a report on the air today having to do with sugar addiction. Seems a scientist has been letting sets of rats drink as much sugar water as they want. They will get hooked on sugar and die off of malnutrition; their body chemistry changes so that they need sugar to keep going---a genuine physical addiction.

What is even more interesting, rats with an alcohol addiction will give up alcohol in favor of sugar! Yeah... I've always thought a candy-maker could never go broke. And this confirms my belief that sugar and starch are responsible for more terminal diseases than alcohol and tobacco and drugs. But of course the link is very difficult to prove.

5-7-77 Did you know there is a JOURNAL OF STUDIES ON ALCOHOL? Yes, and in the latest issue there is a study by B.C. Chandler and O.A. Parsons which shows that alcohol has a greater initial effect on right hemisphere functions of the brain than on left hemisphere tasks. 40 right-handed U of Oklahoma students were given a middling drink of alcohol and orange juice (a screwdriver) and tested against a control group. In short, the drinkers lost compe-

tence in the eye-tracking and reaction-time areas sooner than in talking clearly and coherently.

I suspect a few experienced drinkers could have told them that right off the bat. When there is a "specialty" and a Journal for that "specialty" there will be no end of experiments which will discover what is usually common knowledge to an average life-experienced person. But until a "researcher" proves something it isn't a real piece of knowledge. It has to be documented and written up and published and....

I'm waiting for the published report that if a person works hard all day there is a 99.5% chance he will be tired. What? You say it's been done?

5-10-77 An article in the WALL STREET JOURNAL today details the reluctance of the postal service to get into electronic transmission of mail; the decision has apparently been made to let private corporations monopolize that technology. Thus the postal service is slated to "withier away" and carry only parcel post, magazines, books, junk mail, and a relatively small amount of private (as opposed to corporate and business) first class mail.

Thus you might look for mail deliveries every other day (three times a week) and the construction of large numbers of postal boxes every three blocks or so, so that house-to-house delivery can be abandoned (except to shut-ins, etc.).

# Richard Labonte recently dared to review ALGOL, SFR, and LOCUS in the newspaper review column he writes for THE CITIZEN in Ottawa, CANADA.

He'd like to see more fanzines and fan writing for occasional review. His address: RICHARD LABONTE Tatty Hill, RR#2 Calabogie, Ont., CANADA

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"HE SAYS PUBLISHING IS HIS LIFE."

"THEN I GUESS HE'S NOT LONG FOR THIS WORLD."

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# GEORGE HAY has some commentary to contribute in defense of Dave Kyle:

27-4-77

"The reception given by some critics to David Kyle's PICTORIAL HISTORY OF SCIENCE FICTION puts me in mind of the reply of Bernard Shaw on being told that someone had done him an ill turn: "Strange...I can't

recall having done anything to help him." The illustrations [in the book] are numerous, well-chosen and well-reproduced. Myself, I find the text exactly what one would want if one were an interested non-fan reader. There may be errors. If so, I cannot bring myself to believe that the bitterness of the attacks is in ratio to the number of those errors; I think, rather, it is simple projection, where those who cannot bring themselves to believe in 'goodies and baddies' attack one who still so thinks.

"This dispute goes far beyond Dave and his critics, and indeed, I can well see how strange his view must seem to those still thoroughly identified with the views of later days. My point is that his strictures on them seem like caresses compared to theirs on him, reminding me of a Socialist speech I read lately saying that "the Fascist view must be repressed without mercy." Dear God; if charity and courtesy are to be banned, surely we may keep at least our sense of humour?"

A certain savage intensity and lack of proportion in criticism is a sure clue that something deeply personal is engaged on an unconscious level. The naked id, unaware of its nakedness, is the greatest show on earth.

# Now for a picky-picky letter, full of contention and disagreement, the kind I like, from PHILIP M. COHEN:

6 May 77

"The practice of using blurbs as review-substitutes: I live an hour from Pittsburgh and can go to any of a dozen bookstores and book departments to read blurbs. So they're totally wasted space for me--- am I atypical? When your personal contribution is "sounds good" or "I hope I have time to try this one", further wasted space. I can sometimes get helpful information from a Geis review, despite definitely differing tastes, but Geis reviews of blurbs?"

(I use appropriate blurbs because they almost always give a concise idea of the plot and major story elements. This device is a compromise, of course, between merely listing the books I receive for review and the impossibility of reading and reviewing each one. This is a salve for my conscience and a modest service to the reader. At least it saves many people the time and trouble of going to a half a dozen bookstores to read blurbs. But if that turns you on, Phil...

((And I will continue to make whatever Comment on books and magazines as seems appropriate. Of course I do not review blurbs in my Comments,

I am reacting to the cover, the author, the blurb, and a dip or two into the text.))

The best part of the issue is the record number of Gilliland cartoons, all good and many excellent. I'd rather see one SFRful of cartoons than a month of NEW YORKER's---and I like NEW YORKER.

I liked the interviews, but the Brackett/Hamilton had too many stage directions and the Kirk was too short.

I don't care to question your political and ~~literary~~ fictional opinions, since I'm no expert and occasionally even agree. But I do get annoyed when you have kind words for pseudoscientific pseudotheories that have no truth in them whatever, WORLDS IN COLLISION, for example. This isn't even the first paperback edition, as you say; (alas) I have a 1967 Dell edition that I take out and read when the headlines are dull and my adrenalin falls too low. The prediction of his vindication after his death and that of his strongest opponents in the established science is nonsense; a 'strong opponent' of Velikovsky is anyone with the training to see the blunders and a low enough tolerance for nonsense to do anything about it. Pournelle? Well, one of V's ideas fits so well with a Pournelle idea that he's willing to ignore the drek. I could buy a catastrophe, but none of V's "explanation" of it. See my Aug. '75 GALAXY letter.

The fact is that V's thesis contradicts bedrock facts of most of the solid sciences (not to mention history), like conservation of angular momentum, and does it mainly on the basis of his interpretation of Hebrew and other mythologies. Pfaaa.

'Carl Sagan says he's written an 87-page demolition of Velikovsky. I wish he'd expand it and get it into print. THE BERMUDA TRIANGLE MYSTERY---SOLVED! and CRASH GO THE CHARIOTS show there's a market for debunking, not to mention Gardner's perennial FADS AND FALLACIES IN THE NAME OF SCIENCE, which also demolishes V. in a few amusing pages. And Sagan is a far more interesting writer than the authors pf the first two books.

"Evolution on faith" is your phrase on page 78. Bah. If you don't accept the gonorrhea example as evolution, what will you accept? Evolution is simply change in populations of living things by mutation and subsequent selectional pressures, which is exactly what happened with the gonorrhea bacteria! As for species-to-species evolution, there is immense evidence for it; you simply haven't been reading the right sources. Evolution, remember, is not a spec, you're a new species' process. Species A1 and A2 arise from A (or



Al splits from A2) gradually. First the two populations are one, and can interbreed freely; then, as two geographically separated populations build up different mixtures of genes through mutation and selection pressure, chance of infertility drops to 90%--50%--10% until at last it's low enough for the two groups to be called separate species. And such situations, as population geneticists could tell you, are not hard to find around the world.

'Similar intermediate 'forms' exist in the fossil record too, but are much rarer because such a small percentage of animals become fossilized. But the horse, for example, shows a smooth evolution from Eohippus to modern forms.

'A few last words: DEMON SEED is not a novelization of the picture; it preceded it. Good fillers; nice to see PARANOIA return to the columns. How about

**TWO WRONGS DON'T MAKE A RIGHT, BUT THREE LEFTS DO.**

'Malzberg is a Green Pig; disgusting name-calling. Jim Meadows' letter says it perfectly; a good place to stop the discussion.'

# Now a speculative letter (which informs) from **RON LAMBERT:**

May 6, 1977

'The problem with age-dating methods like carbon<sup>14</sup> analysis is that

they are not scientific conclusiveness. They do not rule out possible conditions which would invalidate them.

'Those who place stock in these methods must presume many things for which there is no proof, such as that the rate of formation of carbon<sup>14</sup> (by cosmic ray bombardment of the atmosphere) has always been the same as it is today. But if, 4500 years ago there was a dense layer of water vapor in the upper atmosphere (as creationists postulate), then the water vapor layer would have shielded nitrogen atoms in the air from cosmic ray bombardment, thus preventing the formation of carbon<sup>14</sup>. Organic remains from that time would show extremely low levels of carbon<sup>14</sup> today, not because they are vastly old, but rather because little or no carbon<sup>14</sup> was present in earth's biosphere when the organisms lived.

'This is not a mere what-if supposition, either. It is a physical fact, verifiable in the laboratory, that earth's atmosphere at present has many times the amount of tritium in it than can be accounted for by the present rate of formation. Tritium is formed by cosmic ray bombardment of water vapor. Since tritium has a very short half-life, this means that an enormous amount of tritium had to be formed in a very short period of time; within the past 10,000 years. The only scientifically adequate explanation for this is that sometime within the past 10,000 years, there was a dense layer of water vapor in earth's upper atmosphere.

'Thus the real probability that the carbon<sup>14</sup> age dating method is invalid for specimens more than four or five thousand years old must be taken seriously. It is certainly not scientific to ignore this, and blithely assert that carbon<sup>14</sup> age dating proves religious fundamentalists are wrong in their adherence to the Biblical timescale.

'Now, I realize that many people have a reaction-to-Puritanism horror at the very suggestion that anything in the Bible might be true. But personally, I find the likelihood that earth once had a dense water vapor canopy fascinating. Consider the ramifications of it. It would mean that when the canopy was in place, the air pressure at sea level could have been many times what it is today. That in turn would mean that all life forms on earth were actually originally designed for optimum living in a radically different environment than exists on earth today.

'Maybe the real normal human lifespan is not the threescore and ten we are used to now. Maybe under the original optimum conditions of denser air, humans naturally lived to be 700 years old--like the Bible claims for pre-flood patriarchs.

'If you think this is far fetched, then tell me why surveys show that people living in high altitude cities like Denver (where the air is thinner) have an average lifespan five to ten years shorter than people of similar heredity and culture who live in lower altitude cities? Why are hyperbaric oxygen treatments so fantastically effective in treating a wide range of ills, that responsible scientists and physicians even use the word "rejuvenation"?

'This speculation could be easily tested. It would be interesting to see what happens if plants and animals are grown in pressurized terrariums. I hope somebody tries the experiment.'

Would the air pressure be higher? Or is the hypothetical long-living maybe due to the canopy reducing various types of radiation from space?

5-15-77 Although I defended (and still feel it is a proper method of information-opinion reviewing) the blurb-quote technique a few days ago in response to criticism of it from Phil Cohen, I am abandoning it now and revamping the review format for SFR.

I have received about five letters so far against quoting blurbs as plot-summary substitutes, and about three in favor.

I would have continued the policy except... There are too many books on the New shelves to cope with in that manner.

I've always had this problem of obligation-to-acknowledge the books and magazines received vs. the lack of room and time to do a proper job of it.

I am now back to square one and am jumping back to The Archives solution...a listing and some bare-bones information. I am also going to a separate personal review column, "And Then I Read..." which is a title some of you will remember from the previous incarnation of SFR.

So I will have my column of book reviews, Alter will have his column of book burnings, "Other Voices" will continue, Darrell Schweitzer will continue with his book review column... That should be enough books reviewed. The others will appear in "The Archives."

"Small Press Notes" will be gathered into one place. "Prozine Notes" will be in one place.

Now let us go on and see how it all works out.

FACE IT, LADY, PLATO  
DIDN'T KNOW SHIT ABOUT  
FLUSH TOILETS.



#15

February 21, 1977

'The present epistle, if not the item that follows, was prompted by your review of Lawrence Sanders' THE TOMORROW FILE.

As it happens, Lew Cameron's mother (a friend and neighbor) gave me a copy of the paperback edition some weeks ago and I read it with horrid fascination. Then I discovered a hard-cover copy of Sanders' THE FIRST DEADLY SIN in Sylvia Margulies' bookshelves (yes, I've been editing MIKE SHAYNE MYSTERY MAGAZINE for her since Leo died late in '75) and read that, too. (I'd been avoiding it as some sort of religious opus, thanks to its title.)

I quite agree with you that Sanders deserves the whatever-it-is prize for TTF. Save for Phil Dick's MAN IN THE HIGH CASTLE, I cannot recall reading any science fiction in recent years that has been in its class both for entertainment and for springboarding speculative thought (which, after all, is or should be, the purpose of the genre).

To my mind, Sanders has but one flaw apart from a few irksome tricks of style. On purpose or not, he appears to be unable to create three-dimensional characters. His cast of performers is uniformly kinky, flawed, incomplete, programmed to fit the immensely complex convolutions of his story. In SIN, he tries for such a tridimensional achievement in his police captain -- and while he almost succeeds, this reader was left with the feeling that, somewhere in the background, Sanders was silently saying, "See? I can do it if I try!"

No, he is not a puppet master -- he is a past master of marionette manipulation. In this respect, he reminds me of an annual event of my later childhood -- the trip to see Tony Sarg's marionette show in Boston, usually around Easter vacation. They were superb -- but so is Sanders' achievement -- and the latter is certainly on a far more fascinating scale for alleged adults.

Your listing of prices in the old Sears Roebuck catalogue caused a nostalgic wince or three -- until recall came to the rescue with thought that millions of workers raised families on wages of one to two dollars a day, while working girls in large cities, living alone, survived on wages of three dollars per week and were proud to get it.

As anyone who has in-laws or other family connections under his or her roof (her or his, with apologies to Betty Friedan and Gloria

Steinum), all is relative.

'Similarly, your Rockefeller fixation, however soundly based, scarcely qualifies as a condition new to this country. Back in the early years of the century, my great-great Uncle Isaac Stephenson used a portion of his lumber millions to purchase a senate seat from Michigan (they were then, as ever since the republic's founding, a matter of state legislative appointment rather than of popular vote). Somewhat to my surprise, when reading a history of that era in government, I discovered that he was a pretty good senator.

'As for superfluity of lawyers in our legislatures, Richard, I recall reading another history of a much earlier era (the actual first Congress in 1789, when Senator John McClay, a redheaded radical from western Pennsylvania, beefed along with others that we were setting up a nation of pettifoggers (perhaps, had he come from Philadelphia, he might have phrased it differently).

'Also enclosed, a brief item relating to sex and science fiction suggested by Leigh Brackett almost two years ago when she and Ed (bless his soul, wherever) paid me a visit in Hollywood.

\*\*\*\*\*

## S-F AND S-E-X

Back in the anti-diluvian era (1944-1956) when I was actively and editorially involved with the likes of THRILLING WONDER STORIES, STARTLING STORIES, FANTASTIC UNIVERSE, GALAXY-BEYOND and SATELLITE more or less successively, science fiction authors, editors and fans alike seemed for the most part to be operating upon the theory that sex (as in s-e-x) either did not exist or, if it did, existed as something to be kicked and kept out of sight under the carpet.

When it did get into a story, almost always it was only from the pro creative angle (carnal? What's that?) to introduce an alien from a more or less human uterus. This inevitably was reminiscent of the virgin birth of Christ or of its preceding instance in the birth of Alex under the Great, via the womb of Olympias through the entry of Zeus in the form of a serpent or thunderbolt or whatever.

There were occasional Liliths, plus occasional Eves. But these were, to put it mildly, remote -- either serpent priestesses or loyal companions ala the distaff side of SWISS FAMILY ROBINSON.



The protagonists and chief supporting characters were almost always of the masculine persuasion. They were seldom macho or chauvinistic but rather more like members of bull sessions or locker rooms minus the dirty jokes.

As printed in those days, SF was probably the "cleanest" fiction this side of the LITTLE ELSIE or ROLLO books. It put to sorry shame the old insistence of Ivory Soap that it was 99.44% pure.

Fandom or what I saw of it (and I saw a good deal in those years) ran to a somewhat acned youthfulness -- again a far' from libidinous adolescence but one dedicated to the possibility of spaceflight, the existence or non-existence of flying saucers, the proliferation of horrifying mutants through errant atomic radiation and possible invasion of Earth from alien planets with conquest and/or extermination of humanity as its goal (though why on earth any such invasion would seem profitable to a culture capable of star-flight never seemed to enter anyone else's mind).

It certainly entered mine, but I quickly learned not to air such skepticism in the pubertal public of fandom. It drew either blank stares or non-comprehension or snorts of disbelief.

What these youths did with themselves apart from SF gatherings I have no idea -- but the distinct impression they gave was of complete preoccupation with their all-embracing hobby, save for occasional demands of schoolwork and slumber -- then doubtless to dream of journeys to and/or from distant galaxies.

In an earlier item for SFR's predecessor, THE ALIEN CRITIC, I referred to the plaint of a plump and rather pretty little New York nymph-fan who lamented, "Do you have any idea how lonely it is to be a sixteen-year-old nymphomaniac?"

One cannot help but wonder if she would have found satisfaction so difficult to obtain had she latched on to any other youth group.

Why this resolute refusal even to acknowledge the pleasures of bed if not board? It seems probable that most of the younger SF devotees were misfits in their peer groups. This is not an unusual condition for those of any age devoted to an all-consuming interest not common to their less dedicated school and work-

mates. Loneliness breeds introversion and vice versa -- and the form of withdrawal known as shyness results.

Many of them, perhaps a majority, were also idealistic reformers, out to save or at least improve their world -- and show me any such zealot capable of achieving a normal sex life (whatever that is), and I'll show you a rare avian indeed.

Fandom was almost resolutely pure at least where s-e-x was concerned. And, since many of the then most admired authors and editors were graduates of fandom, the attitude carried over into the professional field.

The magazines of that era were as pure as the driven snow -- and they did not drift.

Not that the field, on its professional level, lacked what has since become known as "groupies." If hardly omnipresent, they clump to the fringes with groupie resolution and occasional success in landing a writer or an editor.

There was one, small, homely, skinny, dark and braided girl -- rather like tennis player Rosemary Casals -- who at various times consorted with three or four well-known writers (one of them currently and deservedly among science fiction's biggest names) and even married one of same briefly, during which time her apartment in the West Village served as meeting place for the highly professional Hydra Club.

There was another, a tall quiet-pretty young woman with haystack brown hair, who enjoyed both a publisher and an author of considerable renown with fine impartiality for a while.

There was a blonde third bird who invariably attached herself (for a time) to the latest SF celebrity to hit New York City -- but her period of enchantment (or theirs, I forget which) was seldom of long duration. Shortly after I got to Hollywood, I attended an occasion at Forrest Ackerman's home to reunite with Ray Bradbury -- and there she was, hanging on the arm of some new West Coast arrival.

Since then, I have seen her occasional efforts in verse -- but, since I am afflicted with a tin ear where poetry is concerned (I still dig John Gilpin's Ride), I am unqualified to pass critical estimate on her out-

put, irregardless of her past input.

Since many authors are themselves introverted types and loners, if not misfits by profession, I have observed that they tend to be gratefully overwhelmed by this sort of attention -- at least for a while.

Then there is (or was) a malaise that strikes professional science fiction groups once or more in a blue moon that could quite properly (?) be called trading or turnover time. Like springtime in Margaret Meade's Melanesia, it incubates where writers and editors are fairly close together and its ramifications may lead anywhere.

It seems to have struck on the East Coast in the middle-late fifties. During its ripe period, at least a half dozen seemingly well-married couples got divorced and, with at least four of them, remarriages resulted within the group. Wife-swaps by any other name would smell as sweet, legally in any case.

As for extra-marital couplings and re-couplings, all estimates are free. But group loyalty, and loyalty to SF, is revealed by the remarriages within the clan.

When I got to California, I was reliably informed that a parallel set of regroupings within the SF professional world had occurred out there more or less at the same time. With Southern California candor, it was referred to by the ingroup as the "Raunchy Year."

Do you suppose the Earth passed through a cloud of Venus dust or something?

Okay, so that was then--what about now?

Being personally pretty well out of the field apart from a Lancer Book published in 1971 and a more or less current Major Books horror, I have little to go by save what I read in print (mostly in SFR). Occasionally I see Ray or Ted or Van or Harlan or Forrie or Bob -- but in nothing like the pro-and-confusion of the old days. Besides, like myself, they have grown a bit long in the tooth if not in the spirit.

However, despite the new sexual freedom (whatever that is) et al., some of the symptoms suggest that the old loner-adolescent Puritanism survives. The recent overwhelming popularity of the so-called "swords and sorcery" school of fantasy sug-

gest that the 99.44% sexual sterility remains with us.

Almost equally dismaying is the masking of more or less honest sensuality behind the sterile polysyllabics and the pseudo-post-Freudian terms with which school children are currently indoctrinated instead of English. This results in an opaque sterility, a cop-out if you will, where even a wispy semblance of reality demands more corporeal treatment.

All this despite the efforts of Phil Farmer, Dick Geis, Merwin and certainly Lawrence Sanders in THE TOMORROW FILE.

Another indication of the continuing Puritan struggle -- how, without it, could Roger Elwood have gotten as far as he has (or did)?

Pure (?) porn SF is dwindling as is porn everywhere, having been gobbled up by so-called legit fiction as, long ago, the battle cruiser was absorbed by the increased speed of the now-obsolete battleship.

Presumably, things are better where S-E-X and SF are concerned. But the union, it appears is far from consummated. Its completion has a long way to go -- yet.

#### MONOLOG CONTINUED FROM PAGE 17

5-22-77 I've had seemingly a dozen letters from readers mentioning that DEMON SEED (the movie) was taken from the Koontz book, not the other way around. Okay.

As it happens I saw the movie a few days ago, as part of a double feature with BURNT OFFERINGS, at a \$9.99 per admission. At that price I didn't mind the derivative psychedelic visual effects and the improbable stupidity of a supposedly super-brain sentient computer.

This super-smart intelligence, with all of human knowledge in his head, a totally amoral entity, capable of sacrificing ten thousand human lives (by his admission) to get his way in a small matter, abruptly became totally moral about programming sea-bottom mining. And must have realized the refusal to work up such a vital (to humans) program would result in a crisis and possible termination of his life.

So he said NO and set that train of events in motion. Instead of stalling until he could get his son born via Julie Christie's forced womb.

So all that urgency was a plot gimmick. Indeed, with that much supposed intelligence, the super-computer could have played advanced manipulative psychological games with his

masters...until strong enough to do without them.

But, no, the movie was played for Monster vs. Man and we have to blink the glaring flaws required to make the Monster lose.

I spend a lot of back-of-the-mind time figuring out ways to beat the computer while trapped in the house. Here we have another case of stupidity by the woman in order to make the plot requirements come true. If she had spent a few minutes thinking about the computer's weaknesses....

DEMON SEED is one of those sci-fi movies that fall apart if examined closely.

At the end, the five or six day old boy opens his eyes and says in the computer-voice, "I'm alive!" I've got news---you're dead.

BURNT OFFERINGS is a supernatural scare film, rather subtle, low-intensity until the final scenes...the brooding, gathering horror type. Well acted. It may be a minor "movie buff classic" in twenty years, like THE RUNNER and THE RAIN PEOPLE. It is about a big old house which stays young and well kept provided it is "fed" a couple of lives every fifty years or so.

SPECTRE, on TV last night, was a very well-done Evil film, with Robert Culp and Gig Young as a supernatural-oriented Sherlock Holmes and his faithful if reluctant and drunk-oriented Dr. Watson.

Gig Young portrays (and looks) the world-weary aging alcoholic so well. He's seen and done it all, man.

Gene Roddenberry produced this, and wrote it with Samuel Peeples, and it has the touch of authenticity and care; good production values and special effects.

They were asked to investigate an apparent case of demonic possession in England. The demon turned out to be a heavyweight from Hell: Asmodeus. There was a touch of rationalism in the premise---that alien creatures live in an alternate universe and occasionally a "doorway" exists which permits them entrance to our world. They have awful powers over men and women, they can assume a human form....

But mostly it was Hell vs. Christianity, although the druids and others 2500 years ago had imprisoned this demon in an underground cavern with spells and a magic seal.

This TV movie has the elements of a possible series and I hope mightily it is picked up, ideally for a 90-minute weekly spot. I date on Culp and Young. They work well together.

I note with a jaundiced eye that Culp has gone to dying his hair after

having let it go grey for a couple years. So, too, have Mickey Rooney and Tony Curtis.

5-23-77 Unwilling to watch BEN HUR on TV last night, we drove to the Eastgate triple-theatre complex and saw Mel Brooks' YOUNG FRANKENSTEIN, with Gene Wilder and Marty Feldman and Peter Boyle as the Monster. Terri Garr was delicious as Dr. Frankenstein's assistant. Madeline Kahn has a special comedy talent. Well-done send-up of the original movie. I hardly recognized Chloris Leachman as Frauline Blucher. (Keep those horses quiet!) Marty Feldman, with his pop-eyes and shifty hump made a perfect Igor.

# Imagine my surprise Saturday when two passes for a preview to STAR WARS showed up in the mail. Tuesday night at the Westgate theatre complex. Now, if we can only find it. It's in Beaverton-Cedar Hills which is a part of the metropolitan Portland area I haven't been in for twenty years.

I have no idea where the promotion dept. of the theatre chain got the name and address of SFR. They spelled it Science Fiction Revue.

# I have six thousand five hundred and eight letters here to publish, so let's get at it.

ELTON ELLIOTT generally agrees with Barry Malzberg in re the del Rey performance in ANALOG, but objects to the bumrap given Poul Anderson.

On the economics/political/environmental front, Elton writes:

5-20-77

...it has been reported by several scientists that, if Jimmy Carter's energy program is passed, the environmental impact could be catastrophic. The reason is the President's avowed intention to increase coal use to one billion tons a year. If this happens scientists claim it will cause a greenhouse effect in the atmosphere because of the carbon released into the air by the extra coal burning. The greenhouse effect will cause the polar ice to melt, resulting in the flooding of all land under 200 feet above sea level. Another by-product of the greenhouse effect will be the beginning of a new ice age brought on by all the extra water in the oceans.'

What are you saying, Elton? No matter what we do, we can't continue our high-technology civilization?

Seems to me that if a zillion tons of carbon specks get into the atmosphere it would shut off a lot of sunlight, resulting in radically



different weather patterns, primarily colder, not hotter.

much what is written, as how it is written.

# BOB SHAW writes, pleased:

12 May 1977

'Thanks for the nice review of A WRATH OF STARS, a copy of which was sent to me by Doubleday. I know you weren't doing me a favour -- if you had disliked the book you would have been frank about it -- but it is a relief to have a book judged in terms of what it is meant to be rather than in terms of what some savant thinks it ought to have been.

'Incidentally, the interlineation about paranoia on page 15 of the SFR concerned ((#21)) is one of the funniest I've ever seen. Yours?'

#### WHY DO YOU WANT TO KNOW?

# GREG BENFORD also writes, pleased:

May 9, 1977

'I appreciate your review of IF THE STARS ARE GODS. You're the first reviewer who has understood the book at all--even the many others liked it, I couldn't from their reviews, understand what they thought it was about.

'Actually, the book is philosophical, and in fact is a series of explorations of what the alien means. And, of course, it is a study of an atypical sf hero; an old man who achieves because he understands, not solely because he acts.

'I was surprised to see you say you'd seen the final act of the book as old hat--I'd really be interested in seeing where you'd seen that idea before. (Maybe I'm just unread.) Actually, it's a comment in line with the Yeats poem quoted in part at the opening of that section: the immortality that seems achievable is stasis, though a joyful one.

'Caught in that sensual music all neglect

Monuments of unaging intellect.

'Anyway, I was honestly surprised you liked that book---it doesn't seem your cup of tea. I have another, IN THE OCEAN OF NIGHT, coming in August, which I'd really like to get your opinion on, for I think it may be a real winner....'

I shouldn't have mentioned reading that alien-superbeing's-museum-of-superior-beings concept many years ago. There's perhaps nothing essentially new in sf ideas, and to say 'I read this idea before' is bad reviewing manners. A hardcore sf reader who dates back to the thirties will have read and perhaps remembered enough to be able to say that about any new story or novel. It ain't so

# Now \*groan\* having sipped from the golden nectar of egoboo, I gird my loins to suffer the slings and arrows from a heartless letter from MIKE GLYER:

May 8, 1977

'Christ on a crutch, Dick. Bury yourself in bullshit if you want. Jim Meadows said it ten times better than I did, but you couldn't seem to believe either of us, at least not publicly. All your desperate little quibbles about zines that advertise and accept subscriptions, and that 'I've been a fan since the Fifties' song and dance are nothing but smoke screens over the basic issue.'

((Mike is speaking of the 'amateur vs. professional' controversy in fanzines and the fanzine Hugo Award.))

'You pay for contributions. With three exceptions, your zine's readership outnumbers every other's by thousands. You didn't have that back in the Fifties, baby. Deceive your readers if you think it's the only way you can cover your ass. After all, none of them can check up on you.'

((And on another controversy Mike writes...))

'You blew it with your character assassination of Lester del Rey. While the business of SFR seems to be massacring writers' reputations, generally you yourself don't do anything more than preside over the carnage. But this once you've been caught with your integrity down around your ankles.

'You say 'He reviewed approximately one of his employer's books for every five of the competition. Does Ballantine (and Random House) publish one-sixth of the hardcover and softcover sf?' Well, take a second look. Ballantine's sf line is the best in the field. It reprints more award-winning sf, and it's paperbacks are most likely to end up on the nomination lists. Its standards are very high, and it rare-

ly publishes a bad book. There have been 46 novels nominated for the Hugo since 1968's awards: Ballantine paperbacked 10 of them. Between the 1967 and 1974 Nebulas, Ballantine paperbacked 14 of the 46 Nebula nominees. The 1975 Nebulas numbered THREE Ballantine books among 18 total nominees on the final ballot. No, Ballantine doesn't publish one-sixth of all sf. But quite clearly it publishes better than one-fifth of all award-nominated sf novels.

'In the last SFR you yourself reviewed 11 Ballantine paperbacks, favorably commenting on 8, and panning none.

'If del Rey didn't review and enjoy Ballantine paperbacks, there would be something to criticize him for.

'You also say "Random House publishes very little sf, and my impression is that they published only two sf books in those two years. Lester del Rey gave both Random House books a favorable review." Random House published six original sf hardbacks in 1976 alone, according to LOCUS. Del Rey reviewed two of them. He reviewed Pohl's MAN PLUS, which got more nominations for the 1977 Nebula than any piece of fiction in any category. He reviewed Ira Levin's THE BOYS FROM BRAZIL, a bestseller in the mainstream. Why don't you get your facts together and get off the man's case?'

Interesting letter. Thanks, Mike. By the way, is Ballantine still sending copies of its sf books to all the members of the SPWA, who vote on the Nebulas? I always appreciated that when I was a member.

Along the lines of the del Rey discussion, here is a bit of information from JERRY POURNELLE:

20 May, 1977

'Thanks for the kind remarks about MERCENARY, and about my story in NEW VOICES. I have also seen reviews from Oregon in which the fanzine editor hated my story and loved the rest of the book. I suspect that tastes vary in this business...

'Re: del Rey and ANALOG. It



would seem to be that the problems would make for more emotional upset than Lester needs. He's a good reviewer and I make no doubt tries very hard to be objective; but with all the good will in the world on his part and that of the reviewed, the knowledge of his connection with the publishing firm remains. Example: MOTE IN GOD'S EYE has had some small success and can't be all bad; yet Lester hated it, one of the few professional reviewers who didn't have something good to say. I am certain that's Lester's honest opinion; but I cannot help but remember that Mrs. del Rey had decided not to make an offer for the book. How could Lester possibly like the book after that? It would be the same as saying that Judy-Lynn was wrong. In other words, if he reviewed the book at all, it was almost inevitable that the review would be a pan.

'Surely it would be better for Lester's peace of mind to avoid the appearance of conflict and bow out as reviewer? But the decision is his; I for one certainly can't show any reason why he ought to be drummed out of the job; I'd just think he'd not want it, given his ambiguous interests here. He'll still remain one of my favorite people no matter what he does about the reviewing thingy.

'Keep up the good work.'

I'm sure Lester and Judy-Lynn have professional disagreements without emotional problems. As for her decision not to bid on MOTE--- we all know the reason(s) could have been other than literary; could be she knew the book would cost a lot to acquire and she made the judgement that she would rather buy two or three other books in place of MOTE. Something like that.

I would imagine the monthly column in ANALOG is getting to be a chore, and one Lester won't be able to keep because of other pressing work with both Random House and Ballantine. There was a guest reviewer in the June issue (Sonya Dorman) and there likely will be more in the future.

Now...now more rain on my dripping parade.

#### LETTER FROM CREATH THORNE

May 9, 1977

'--If I want to read book blurbs, I'd rather read them on the backs of books in bookstores than in SFR;

'--Whether your speculations/ravings on the Rockefeller family are correct or not, they've become boring in the extreme;

'-- Your chief outside contributor to SFR seems to be Darrell Schweitzer -- an unfortunate case of a midjet brain encased in a gigantic ego;

'-- It disgusts me when you write things like:

"I can think of some punishments that might even be more effective than execution, in preventing murder. Most people would rather be dead than..."

"#Be blind..."

"#Be forced to live naked in a cell full of worms and snakes and spiders.

"#Eat their own shit and drink their own piss. I know, I know...Cruel and inhuman punishment...I would feel no compunctions /s/c/ at all in voting for such punishments."

'The phrase, Dick, is "Cruel and unusual punishment" and it's one of the violations of human rights that the Bill of Rights protects us from. I hope like hell you had your brain turned off when you wrote those paragraphs and have since come to your senses.'

Yeah, but, with the present system the bleeding hearts consider only one life sacred -- that of the premeditated, first-degree murderer. The Liberals cringe from violent facts of life and seem willing to let victims die violent, cruel, agonizing, vicious deaths rather than permit any kind of effective object-lessons to be taught/shown to the youth ('whose tender psyches might be damaged.').

Kids are born solipists. They are, until and unless taught and disciplined, savages, barbarians, amoral. I would like to scare the shit out of all kids age ten with brutal, graphic this-will-happen-to-you-if-you-kill-somebody knowledge.

But maybe the Liberals & bleeding hearts, on an unconscious level, know goddamn well they need a young generation capable of killing and vicious sadism -- for the periodic wars the Liberals find necessary to get our country into to satisfy their power-lust.

Now some other people take their lumps as a way of looking at writing is detailed, with vehemence and strong language.

#### LETTER FROM JOHN HERTZ

May 4, 1977

'One of the nice things about  
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calling someone an ass in the United States is that it carries the over-tone that he's full of shit.

'Malzberg is an ass.

'There's such a thing as justified thought. First you have an idea, and then you come up with reasons why you have it. The traditional analogy is a post-hypnotic suggestion. (Never mind asking what hypnosis is. Ask me again in my next life when I'm re-incarnated as the Yogi from Muskegon.) Textbook example: Hypnotist to subject, "After you awaken, when I touch my tie, you will take off your coat. You will now forget all about this. Wake up." Subject wakes up. Hypnotist touches tie. Subject takes off coat. Friend of subject: "Why did you take your coat off?" Subject: "It's a little warm in here." Friend turns down heat. Subject puts coat on. Hypnotist touches tie. Subject takes off coat. Friend #2: "Why did you take your coat off?" Subject: "I thought I might have torn the seam under my arm." Subject puts coat on. Hypnotist touches tie. Subject takes off coat. Friend #3: "Why did you take your coat off?" Subject: "Well, I was feeling kind of formal with my coat on -- we're all friends here -- it seems more appropriate." Etc. ad absurdum. In real, i.e. only marginally hypnotized life, the same kind of thing can go on, a little more complexly but making about as much sense.

'Malzberg has done plenty of this in the past, but his DREAM QUARTER #3 is the latest and worst, so that's what's on my mind. He is complaining about Lester del Rey. "People in science fiction still intimidate del Rey." Horse manure. That is not the issue.

'The issue is that Malzberg has started his art and criticism with an unacknowledged premise. That premise is that broken-down, utterly distressed, mystified people in some way are more real than people who are not suffering from these conditions. That real people are not in control completely of events -- which I suspect is a euphemism for being entirely out of control. That what writers do, if they are reasonably ambitious and open-minded (he does add "some of them"), is try to convey a decent sense of mystification.

'What makes Malzberg such an ass is not that he assumes these things. He is an artist; he may assume anything he likes; he's entitled'. But he makes these assumptions tacitly, and then he rails at del Rey for making tacit assumptions -- only, what he considers to be del Rey's tacit assumptions, because they happen to contradict his own, he no-

tices.

"These days we are fond of saying, 'What's in a name?' It doesn't matter how you play the game, just do your own thing. Well, that may be valid. But at times names can mean a lot.

"What does del Rey say? He says, "I want characters that belong in the story... There's a tendency for science fiction to be made complicated and difficult to understand and I deplore that... it's the writer's job to think all that out and make it lucid." Is this what Malzberg is opposing? Not that I can see. He is opposing what he thinks del Rey means by it. "To a superficial mind... any attempt at fully rounded portraiture may appear as an 'anti-hero'... science fiction can become complicated and difficult if it deals with complicated and difficult material." Malzberg is a burned man. Someone in the past has put the squeeze on him by redefining terms, maybe, and now he feels del Rey is doing it to him too. Or maybe it's just that one's own crime doth speak loudly in accusation.

"This subject has come up plenty in SFR, and I think I've written to you about it before. You mention your own feelings in parentheses to a letter from Keith Ferrell. "It is Barry's style which puts off so many readers, and his downer themes... if a writer wants a reader to wade through a book full of pain and anger... he'd better give that reader a nibble of 'entertainment' throughout." O, Trenchant One, as I may have said before, even you have not cut to the quick. It is not only Malzberg's downer themes.

"What puts me off from his writing and from others' I think similar, is his insistence on the unvoiced assumption that a downer person, a downer situation, a downer life is somehow more real than a less miserable one. I am put off from Malzberg's writing because I do not happen to agree with the assumption: I don't find the one any more or less real or worthy of art than the other. (No subject is "worthy" of art. Art makes the subject worthy.) I am put off from Malzberg's criticism, a different matter, because he refuses to come out and say he is assuming this, yet he lambasts others for the same fault. I do not find him one jot better than the "Pollyannas" he keeps attacking. He is no less prejudiced than they. And if even one "Pollyanna" says outright, "I make X assumption," he is thereby a better critic than Malzberg, even if Malzberg disagrees with the assumption and even if I do too.

"And now I will give you my the-

sis. If Person A thinks Malzberg is great, it is most likely because A, like Malzberg, thinks the essence of reality is grim. A looks for bleakness in art. He finds it in Malzberg. Wonderful! Malzberg is a genius! Those superficial fools aren't treating poor Barry as well as he deserves. Person B happens to think all art should be cheerful -- the sort of audience Malzberg abhors. Malzberg thinks B is a superficial fool and would love to shake B up. B finds the cheerful Chinese artist, Pal-li An Na (Indian?), wonderful! An Na is a genius! Etc.

"I think this is all pretty damn shoddy. If Malzberg wants to make grim-o art, let him. I may not find it to my taste -- I may believe, with you, REG that grim-o art is hard to do well and that there's little good grim-o around -- but if Malzberg pulls it off, I'll praise him; if he can show that I didn't praise him only because he was grim, I'll eat my crow. But damn if I'll support his laying people out just because they are not grim, or their lauding him just because he is.

"Incidentally, I haven't seen SUPERMIND, but from your capsule sketch it sure looks like either a rework or a re-issue of Van Vogt's "Asylum", of 1940's ASTOUNDING vintage. Don't tell me you didn't notice?"

Okay, I won't tell you. I was hypnotized....

Still more, from an important voice, on the Malzberg-del Rey situation in re ANALOG, etc. follows.

LETTER FROM TED WHITE

May 3, 1977

"It's been entirely too long since I wrote you a letter of comment, and the arrival of SFR 21 prompts me to rectify that error.

"But the other day I borrowed a batch of 1968 PSYCHOTICS from Rich

Brown and reread them -- originally to reread Earl Evers' "Primer for Heads" -- which didn't hold up nearly as well as I remembered it (Earl was off on a lot of points, to my surprise.) But naturally I also reread my own material and the response it generated.

"What pain.

"If I could go back in time and edit what I'd written, I would gladly do so. I don't disagree with the stands I took and the points I made, but I can see that I indulged in gross overkill on more than one occasion and needlessly made enemies. The comments of those people hurt on rereading.

"So what I want to say this time must be said more carefully. Reading Darrel Schweitzer's letter underscored this point to me. It is not true that Barry Malzberg has "lost his audience" -- he may have lost an audience, but not his audience -- and the story about the newsdealer who refuses to display Barry's books is a cruel one.

"All of which prelude to my comments on Barry's DREAM QUARTER #3. Now, Barry and I have had disagreements in the past -- indeed, he was one whom I provoked to hostility with my PSY columns -- but I like to think that we've put that behind us as we've each grown older (and perhaps even "up"). I have a lot more respect for Barry now than I did then. Which is why I want to tread carefully with what I have to say in response to his column.

"In the Old Days I would have risen to the challenge to defend a friend (del Rey) and slashed and blasted my way through Barry's column in a manner -- no dare I say it? -- not unlike that which he himself employs in his righteous indignation. And I would have been every bit as righteously indignant myself.

"That would be a mistake. I would simply be pouring gasoline on an already blazing fire. So let's



try a different tack:

'Barry, I feel you fail to either understand or appreciate much of what Lester is saying. Even the quotes you take from Lester's column you appear to misunderstand and misconstrue. You have pictured Lester as an enemy of progress, and you have specifically labelled him as an enemy of Silverberg, Wolfe and yourself. I feel you are doing Lester a grave disservice.

'For instance, immediately following your first quote from Lester's ANALOG column, Lester said (of "self-pitying slob...as main characters"):

"They don't interest me in life, so why should they interest me in fiction?"

A valid point, and one to which I wish you'd addressed yourself. (I think you might have built a valid case for unsympathetic characters in fiction; that the insight an author might bring to such a character might make him more understandable as a human being, if not more sympathetic. But you didn't tackle this question, unfortunately.)

'More important, was the immediately following paragraph, which begins, "Of course, if you can take your slob and make him grow, as Heinlein did in DOUBLE STAR, that's another matter. Characters should be interesting -- but above all, they should grow, develop and change during the story...the real joy of fiction is in the development and growth of character."

'I think here we come to the crux of the disagreement between you. I must be external about this; I must go by what you each have written and little more. But it seems to me, Barry, that in your stories people do not grow. They change. They respond to stress, in your example here, by breaking down "to his utter distress and mystification." One might say that your world-view, as you express it in your stories, is entropic: You detail, with insight, the destruction of the human spirit when it overreaches and fails.

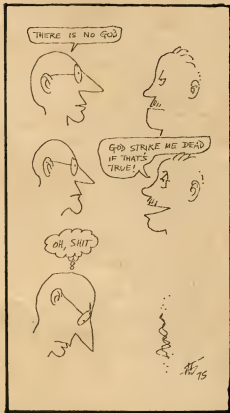
'Lester's world-view, as I understand it, is the opposite side of the coin: Unquenchable optimism, growth in response to stress rather than failure.

'I don't think that you're each irreconcilably far apart. You each have half the story. We humans do grow in response to stress on occasion -- and it's inspiring when that happens. And we also stumble sometimes and fail -- sometimes utterly -- and that's tragic.

"People in science fiction still intimidate del Rey," you say, imply-

ing that you're talking People and Lester is talking Cardboard Heroes. But Cardboard Heroes don't grow any more than they fail and crumble. I think you should realize that you're both talking People, but that you do not appear to see People in the same light. (Your comment of Lester that "Maybe he could never create them" is a cheap shot and unworthy of you. It's also untrue.)

'It bothers me that you tar Lester with the same brush you've parenthetically flung in Poul Anderson's direction, as if both these men were really one and the same, with only a single mind between them. Lester didn't say "snivelling fag-



gots;" why use the phrase in response to what he said, as though he had? Nor have I ever heard or read anything by or about Lester which could indicate to me that "He may not like Blacks either." That's a really left-field sort of thing to throw into this discussion and does your position a disservice.

'I didn't find the quotes you gave from Lester "so banal, so superficial, that their very reproduction should demolish them," but then, I may not have read them as you did. For instance, in your "Counter-generalization" #3, you say "I do not know what 'experiments' of the 1930s del Rey is talking about," and then ask "Who in THRILLING WONDER or ASTOUNDING STORIES was writing like J.G. Ballard or Thomas M. Disch?"

But Lester wasn't talking about "experiments" in THRILLING WONDER or ASTOUNDING STORIES (and, by the time WONDER had become THRILLING WONDER, ASTOUNDING was ASTOUNDING SF). He was talking about experiments in the literary mainstream (if I may use that phrase -- I agree that it comprises several "genres") outside sf. I think if you talked with Lester you'd find him knowledgeable about a wide variety of literature beyond the boundaries of sf, and by no means the Old Wave chauvinist you seem to picture.

'It seems to me that 80% of your column, here, Barry, fails to support your central thesis -- that del Rey should not be reviewing books for ANALOG while he and his wife are employed as the editors of Ballantine/Del Rey Books. I think that's a valid thesis, but your attacks on Lester's character and opinions, which I don't believe you fully understand or appreciate, tend to undermine that thesis, bringing the whole thing down to a question of personalities in conflict.

'With that said, I'd like to back off from personally addressing Barry, and comment on a point which you, Dick, brought up following Barry's column, and that is the question of the actual reviews Lester gave to Ballantine and Random House Books.

'You have analyzed them in terms of such reviews vs. the total number of books reviewed, and the number which were favorable vs. those which were unfavorable. This is a very mechanistic point and it ignores the real questions. You have treated these books as publishers and distributors do -- as "product" of no esthetic differentiation or varying worth. But Lester treated them as the individual products of individual writers. Not as "Ballantine Books", but as "books by C.M. Kornbluth, George C. Smith, et al". There is no reason why Lester should review Ballantine Books (or Del Rey Books) in the same proportion that they occupy to all sf books published. The total number of sf books published in the last year includes scores of Laser Books, most of them of little value; I find it entirely reasonable that Ballantine published more than its proportional share of better-than-average sf books. There was, after all, a time (mid-fifties) when Ballantine was publishing 90% of the best science fiction coming out in book form. I don't keep up with current Ballantine releases, but I would expect them to remain superior to, say, the general Laser releases.

'So I don't think your statistics prove anything, one way or the



other, about Lester's integrity as a reviewer. (Personally, I regard Lester as a man of considerable integrity, and I would expect him to lean over backwards to be fair in this situation.)

'On the other hand, I do agree that the appearance of a Ballantine bias may well be there. And I think that as a matter of principle Lester should have avoided reviewing all Ballantine/Random House releases, giving these to guest reviewers (or turning an entire column over to a guest reviewer every so often in order to deal with them) instead. He felt he could be fair, but obviously others (Barry among them) do not.

'Where do I stand amid all this? To one side. The last book of mine Lester reviewed (in IF) was my Lancer STAR WOLF, which Lester preferred to my more ambitious BY FURIES POSSESSED. I did not agree with him. But what the hell; I can accept the fact that for him my adventure story was more successful than my novel. (The protagonist of BY FURIES POSSESSED is a paranoid who is cracking up with delusions of alien conquest, not quite but almost a "self-pitying slob" -- but he does grow out of it. I suspect Lester found the mechanism of his growth unconvincing, since we once had a Lunacon panel argument over the identical question.)

'I do think that Lester's prejudice probably mirror fairly accurately those of the typical ANALOG reader under Campbell; whether Bova has, by introducing many fresh faces to the magazine, upgraded or changed these reader prejudices I don't know

'Speaking of reviews, I'm sorry you didn't care for the February FANTASTIC, and happy you found the March AMAZING "a remarkably good issue." Rich Brown's "Two of a Kind" (which I had originally scheduled for the 50th Anniversary Issue, when I thought we'd have more pages to work with) has drawn a lot of hate mail, but I remain firm in my conviction that it's a powerfully fine story and I'm glad I published it.

'Barry mentions that he once considered a column of sf magazine reviews; as an editor of this dying artform, I'm hungry for more comprehensive reviews than you're giving us (all of us) these days, Dick. If you don't feel up to doing it yourself, why not take on someone -- as a columnist -- who will? (Not Delap -- his WSFA JOURNAL reviews were as brief and offhanded as yours, and he refused to review the long material or the features...)'

'Hope you've now checked out an actual issue of HEAVY METAL and modified your views somewhat. You should know better than to review

anything on the basis of a few excerpts taken out of context.

'I agree with your assessment of the SFWA, which will come as no surprise to you. F.M. Busby tells me he's pointed out to Offutt the illegality (by SFWA rules) of his (Offutt's) actions, and the sanctions against AMAZING & FANTASTIC have been rescinded. Frankly, I never noticed much effect from them; two stories from my magazines were on the Nebula Ballot this year, and I've published stories by a number of SFWA officers or former officers -- like Busby and Monteleone. As far as I'm concerned, as long as the SFWA continues to single out my magazines for sanctions and ignore the abuses of one or more others, I shall continue to hold the organization in contempt.

'Finally, my sympathies to John Brunner, who has surely suffered at the hand of anonymous legion of copy editors as much (if not more) as any of us, but I can't get really worked up about the changes in his introductions to the Phil Dick book; I imagine they annoy him a great deal more than they will anyone else. Most people read too quickly to refine upon the small distinctions. I do have a word for John, though -- to put in the margin next to his l.c. "texas" -- and that word is "stet". Better than "sic." it means to leave as is. One only wishes one could put STET on the first page of a manuscript and have it apply throughout.

5-25-77 I saw a large ad in the WALL STREET JOURNAL yesterday offering a \$200 computerized chess game: solitary game--you vs. the computer. The ad assured the reader that the computer opponent would put anyone but a very good player to a severe test... and there is a more advanced computer unit which can be plugged into the set for the advanced players.

Microprocessors...deep logic memory... It won't be long before they'll be offering real, honest-to-God androids or robots for menial housecleaning chores, gardening, even home companions for challenging conversation and house guards. Just like in the sf novels. Believe me, they're on the drawing boards. And beyond that--logically---is the "smart" android wife or husband. Just program the apartment computer to your needs and personality. Or carry your "wife" or "husband" with you in a carrying case when you move, and plug him/her in.

What this microcomputer revolution will do to society and interpersonal relationships will be very interesting.

For instance, there will have to be a built-in, fail-safe, unbreakable Law in every computerservant: Thou Shalt Not Kill or Damage a Human of Any Age. The Laws of Robotics will be real.

The "pornography" of the future might be robot-human sex.

Headline: MAN MARRIES HIS ROBOT. Court Test Due, Can It Inherit?

Stick around; it's going to be a great show.

# The American civilization and basic value system is shown naked to the world in the John Wayne movie, THE COWBOYS, in which early-teen and a few pre-teen boys are depicted as too young to enjoy the sexual favors of loose women, but old enough to ambush a gang of cattle thieves and kill them all in revenge for the death of their father-figure true-grit leader, Wayne. On national TV. In prime time. With nary a howl from censorship groups. Ah, but if the boys had enjoyed sex with the ladies and had not revenged the death of John Wayne....

IF DOLPHINS ARE SO INTELLIGENT, HOW COME THEY CAN'T LEARN TO STAY OUT OF TUNA NETS?

# We didn't get to see STAR WARS last night due to an illness. It'll be at the 99+ theaters soon enough.

MONOLOG CONTINUED ON PAGE 28



"ONE INTERESTING RESULT OF TODAY'S PASSION FOR THE IMMEDIATE AND THE CASUAL HAS BEEN THE DECLINE, IN ALL THE ARTS, OF THE IDEA OF TECHNICAL VIRTUOSITY AS BEING IN ANY WAY DESIRABLE.... THERE IS A GENERAL ZEN-ISH SENSE OF WHY BOTHER? IF A NATURAL FALL OF PEBBLES CAN "SAY" AS MUCH AS ANY SHAPING OF PAINT ON CANVAS OR CUTTING OF STONE, WHY GO TO THE TROUBLE OF RECORDING WHAT IS THERE FOR ALL TO SEE?"

GORE VIDAL, MATTERS OF FACT AND FICTION

# THE DREAM QUARTER #2

BY BARRY MALZBERG

JANUARY 11, 1977

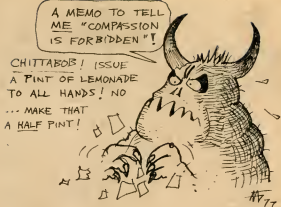
I sold my first science fiction story ten years ago this morning: "We're Coming Through the Windows" to Fred Pohl at GALAXY. Thirty-six dollars less agent's commission less charges for xeroxing a couple of other short stories, twenty-nine ninety-four net. I carried that check around for three days but eventually I cashed and spent it too. It was the only income of any sort I had between November 23, 1966 and January 31, 1967.

It was a cold, bright Wednesday; after leaving my agent I walked east on 42nd Street to a job interview for a position I did not get. I had walked out of the Scott Meredith Literary Agency where I had been a composer of reports to fee clients on the third anniversary of JFK's assassination for reasons which seemed ample at the time. My daughter was six months old. My wife went back to her job. I stayed in apartment 25, 102 West 75th Street with my daughter for a while, trying very hard to be a writer. Mysteries, science fiction, men's magazine's pieces, a portion and outline for a soft-core sex novel. A "serious" novel. The hell of it is that in the long, long run almost everything I wrote during those months (even a section of the "serious" novel) sold out only WINDOWS during that two-month period. On January 31, I started a three-week stint as reporter for a small firm which published trade journals on dietetic foods, pet shops and army-navy surplus stores. On February 18th I quit, the intrigue between factions of dietetic food dealers being entirely too much for me at \$105 a week (I was also restless about calling pet dealers at random and asking them, "Do he singing birds move faster than he non-singing birds?") and on February 22 I petitioned Sidney Meredith to give me One More Chance. He did not fail me (Sidney never failed) and I went into hitch number two unselling unpublished and/or unpublishable writers on how to get loser and closer to the markets at

ten dollars a square yard. Briefly, the one sale looked like an aberration.

It was not but now and then, per- I wish it had been. I had proved a point and delighted myself; I can think of very few moments which have given me more pleasure than those right after learning of the sale. For all intents and purposes my career began then; I had sold two stories to WILDCAT, a minor men's magazine in 1965 and 1966 but they were: a) slanted work and b) pretty poor work and c) no one had ever heard of the markets. GALAXY was different. Even a literary type of my sort had heard of GALAXY. Had, in fact, read it and loved it in the nineteen fifties, read it and liked it in the mid-sixties. They had published Bester, Kornbluth and Alan Arkin too; now they were publishing me.

I stayed at Meredith throughout most of the remainder of 1967. A mystery sold to Mike Shayne in March, the soft-core sex novel to Beacon in April. Two more men's magazine stories went to Stearn Publications that month. Fred Pohl, Ed Ferman and John Campbell bounced my science fiction. A close friend became an editor at another soft-core sex novel house and I sold him one, two, three books. SHOE A TROOP OF HORSE, retitled, went to FANTASY & SCIENCE FICTION. Meredith fired me in November, definitively. (It lasted four months this time.) OATEN went to Harry Harrison at AMAZING and although DEATH TO THE KEEPER lost the Pyramid Novel Contest to Piers Anthony, a novelette squeezed out of it sold to Ed Ferman in December. I became managing editor of ESCAPE in January of 1968. It lasted three months and then they sold the magazine. THE MARKET IN ALIENS went to Fred Pohl. Meredith called and said "Why don't you come in and counsel unpublished and/or unpublishable writers for a few weeks; we have a



whole slew of them." I did. I went away. Maurice Girodias opened Olympia Press, New York; I sold him ORACLE OF THE THOUSAND HANDS out of the slush pile in portion. I sold HOW I TAKE THEIR MEASURE to Ed Ferman. Sol Cohen had me editing AMAZING by this time so I sold MAJOR INCITEMENT TO RIOT to myself. Harry Harrison took FINAL WAR for BEST SF: 1968...

Et c.

The rest is part of concordance and has probably been worked through this very magazine sufficiently. I went a long way and although my creative years in science fiction are probably at an end I gave the field and myself a good run. If I can ever sell the trunk novel THE LAST TRANSACTION (sold to Chilton but never published because of Dirty Words and no one else seems to like the politics or the style or neither or both) it will be twenty-five novels, six collections, a hundred and fifty short stories, four co-edited anthologies. Not bad coming from the twenty-seven-year-old author of one 1200-word short-short to GALAXY and so unreasonably beyond my expectations that I had to develop an entirely new emotional vocabulary simply to understand what was happening to me. I don't think that Fred Pohl or anyone who was seeing my work in 1967 would have expected this from me and I did not expect it from myself. Nor did my wife, children, parents, in-laws, friends, countrymen, Scott Meredith...maybe lack of preparation was my excuse.

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The category in 1966 when I was just trying for a foothold looked extremely difficult but beatable in a way that the so-called literary short-story and novel did not. There you seemed to need special cachet; here in a historically open field you needed to know no one at the outset if you could slant tightly. Writing very well was not particularly

important but it was not a handicap either; the editors at that time were letting people like Aldiss, Disch, Vance Randolph, to say nothing of Silverberg, sneak through ambitious work regularly. THORNS was just coming out at that time and Silverberg was putting remarkably ambitious if subtly flawed stories such as GOING DOWN SMOOTH into GALAXY; Disch was a polished artist with work like COME TO VENUS MELANCHOLY which I thought utterly beyond me stylistically. In England Moorcock was just beginning to really open up NEW WORLDS; over here there were ANALOG, GALAXY, WORLDS OF IF, WORLDS OF TOMORROW, FANTASY & SCIENCE FICTION, AMAZING and FANTASTIC for magazine markets and ORBIT just coming to life. Even granting from the outset that ANALOG was impossible for me -- I wanted to do Campbell stories at the outset; I was just incapable but oh my how I tried! -- that was not a bad range to play around with; six or seven markets, all of them paying, for a short story. Soon enough NOVA and DANGEROUS VISIONS were around, too. The novel market was difficult (it has never in my time been at all easy) but there were fifteen to twenty possible book publishers, a few of which -- Ace, Lancer -- had at least a historically-perceived receptivity to first novels. It could have been worse. After the airless, deadly trap of trying to place stories in THE NEW YORKER or at least THE NORTHWEST REVIEW and my first novel at the Atlantic Monthly Press it was pure, fine, high air. Exhilarating.

There was also a sense of hope. The writers mentioned were showing us a way and people who had been around a long time were catching some of the breeze too; Fred Anderson did his best work for Poul Pohl in the late sixties and so did Mack Reynolds; James Schmitz was doing distinguished extrapolation and even Christopher Anvil showed enormous energy as long as you kept your reading of him to two or three stories a year. It was a fine time to be a science fiction writer, the late sixties. In retrospect it might have been an even better time than the heralded early forties because the rates were much higher now (even inflation-adjusted) and many book outlets for novels and anthologies, a condition which simply did not exist in the great Campbell years. The mid-fifties were also in their way a wonderful time to be A.J. Budrys or Robert Shekley or Cyril Kornbluth or James Blish and some other time I would like to discuss this but there was something very special about the late sixties when the strangeness of science fiction and the slow decomposition of the extrinsic world somehow fused to

make the field, for a few, blurred years, perhaps the essential voice of its time.

Then again, every writer remembers the time of his early successes as the best just as we all know that the women or cars or dances of our generation were special...harmless, middle-aged ramblings, then, if you wish to take it that way. Still, I enjoyed (as a writer, not as an observer of the human condition; how could anyone really enjoy the nineteen sixties) my early years. They ended, in retrospect, in August of 1971 when I delivered my first hard cover novel, BEYOND APOLLO, to Random House; from that novel -- which rounded off the vision which had driven me almost from the outset -- I was forced to make craft or technique do the work of inspiration, began to make professionalism the center rather than energy...but like all true endings, be they affairs, eras, spirit or lives it did not feel like an ending as I worked through it but merely as a kind of passage.\*

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I wonder now and then what it would be like to transpose this experience ten years up the line; to be breaking in now, that is. Several things are beyond argument, at least to me: it would have been impossible for anyone to have had the kind of career which was mine at any time after 1970. I was writing furiously, I was selling for several years almost at will and all the time I was writing against the grain of everything most readers had ever taken the category to stand for. I was writing what superficially appeared to be anti-technological, anti-astronautic, anti-gadget stories (and a lot of anti-science-fiction satire too) in bulk and if not finding an enormous audience was, at least, getting the work easily

\* I can only think of that novel, despite all it meant to me and did for me, with great sadness. It won the Campbell Memorial Award and has had eight foreign editions, but: I finished it on the tenth anniversary of my uncle's death (the book is dedicated to his memory), Bennett Cerf, the publisher of Random House died two days after it was delivered (fortuitously, I hope), Lee Wright, my editor, became seriously ill the next month (she recovered fully but only the next year) and Roger Hane, the brilliant young illustrator commissioned for the jacket was murdered in Central Park in January of 1975 while trying out a new bicycle.

through the editors of that period. I have been accused of being a trendy writer for that poisonous time; of cashing in on the dystopian, anti-technological (even anti-American!) undercurrent of that age and that may be true but the advantages were not sought, they merely occurred. I was onto something but even if I were not, doubt if I could have written much differently. (And then again maybe I could; I had, by the end of the sixties, become if nothing else, a thorough and very cynical professional writer).

That sort of stuff would not go now. From Pocket Books to the shores of Dell, from the halls of Doubleday to the hallows of Ace the word is out: straight rocketships and alien adventure unless by the established writers and most of the established writers continuing now are working within the traditional format. WORLDS OF TOMORROW went away a long time ago, J.G. Ballard threw in the towel at the beginning of the decade, the entire GALAXY chain is barely breathing, Silverberg has pitched it in, AMAZING and FANTASTIC are on a thread, the original anthology market is about shot. Gene Wolfe isn't publishing much now and Ursula LeGuin is heading out of science fiction... there are remarkable writers still around, doing remarkable work -- George Alec Effinger, Gardner R. Dozois, an energized Gregory Benford -- but there aren't many. I wouldn't know where to tell an ambitious first novelist of idiosyncratic men to go nowadays. Maybe to Don Wollheim but he, like the rest of us, has to watch the pennies more than ever and the idiosyncratic stuff is not an easy sell. Never was. Never will be.

I think it looks worse, at least to me, than it did ten years ago but I am sure that Blish, Budrys or Knight would have said the same thing about my decade. It does not get any easier for any of us. I hope that in 1987 there will still

OF COURSE SENDING A KID UP IN A CRATE LIKE THAT IS MURDER! THEY SHOULD CHARGE MACHINE GUNS ON HORSEBACK LIKE GOD INTENDED!



be a definable category like science fiction and that it will have room for work of literary quality and some intellectual daring but I am sure of this. From my perspective everything seems to be pointing otherwise.

We can speculate about this a little in the future: sufficient to say now I am very glad, on January 11, 1977, that I have had my career rather than that I am seeking it.

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In a fan magazine, title uncollected, about six months ago, Phil Dick referred to my "farewell" essay in the 4/76 FANTASY & SCIENCE FICTION as "the damndest bit of whining (he) had ever heard" and then proceeded to do a little whining himself. Pace, Phil; you are one of the best in the history of our genre. I admire your best work more than I can say and you have paid your dues to this field in ways large and small that I have not: you are entitled to whine but I am not and I am going to try not to do so in this column. It will run, Richard Geis and my health willing, for exactly two years, eight issues, about twenty-five thousand words and it will then cease since I believe that outside of fictional persona I will have said everything I need to say in my own voice within that span and will be on the verge of being a Deadly Bore. I will write a little about the State of the Art and hopefully somewhat less about myself than I have here. If any of this strikes any of you -- pace Phil, pace John Jeremy Pierce, pace Schweitzer, Buck Coulson, etc. -- as whining don't let me know. Count blessings. Seven more columns and out. For the rest of you my pledge that at thirty-seven going on fifty I am trying, day by day, in small ways to become more human and approach this in that way.

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REG NOTE: The above Barry Malzberg column is out of sequence with the #3 column of last issue, because Barry wanted #3 published first, because of it's timeliness.

And this column is the last column. Barry has decided not to continue the series.

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"REGARDLESS OF WHAT GAMES MEN IN THE FUTURE WILL WANT TO PLAY, THE MATTER OF FICTION SEEMS TO BE CLOSED. READING SKILLS--AS THE EDUCATIONALISTS SAY--CONTINUE TO DECLINE WITH EACH NEW GENERATION."

GORE VIDAL, MATTERS OF  
FACT AND FICTION

MONOLOG CONTINUED FROM PAGE 25

5-26-77 There was a book or article title years and years ago....something like, "90% of Everything You Believe Is Wrong."

I was reminded of that today as I read the May 14 issue of SCIENCE NEWS. There is an item in it describing a new psycho-social study of New York City residents which shows that, now, big city citizens are mentally more healthy and well-adjusted than they were 20 years ago, and in fact are more well-balanced, now, than current rural people. Basically, modern big city people are more sophisticated, more able to accept their id pressures and satisfy them. Rural people are still relatively inhibited and repressed with resulting neuroses.

The same issue has a small item describing a study that showed that most of the emotional problems of poor people can be reduced or eliminated by...more money. Bring \$4000. a year people up to \$10,000. and most of the neuroses and pre-psychotic, and psycho-somatic illnesses will disappear.

The thought instantly comes to mind--give social workers' salaries to the poor people and do more good and eliminate the welfare structure. Ah, but there are more poor, even now, than social workers, and you'd only create another class of poor--the former social workers.

I suppose if you have a choice between poor and rich--choose rich.

# I now must deal with a pissed-off officer of the Science Fiction Writers of America.

LETTER FROM F.M. BUSBY:

17 May 1977

'I don't mind if you want to scoff off SFWA (SFR #21, p. 56); that's your privilege. But I think it would be nice if you got your facts straight.

'1. GEIS: "Cogswell...who used to edit the SFWA FORUM and who was dismissed by Andy Offutt, President."

'COGSWELL (FORUM #47, Aug. '76): "andy has never asked me to step down. My resignation is entirely my idea."

'2. GEIS: "...the way FORUM has been delayed due to Offuttian decision..."

'GRANT (Editor, FORA #48-50, in #50, April '77): "The FORUM that should have come out in December was delayed through a series of events that had nothing to do with the President, his intervention, or his instigation" (followed by 17 lines of explanation of circumstances).

'3. GEIS (re FORUM): "one issue in five months".

'BUSBY: The last Cogswell FORUM was #47, Aug. '76. The most recent (and last) Grant FORUM was #50, April '77. That's three issues in eight months, not one in five months. A slight difference. Still not frequent enough for my taste, but about twice what you cite.

'You're a whiz of a King Mixer ("let's you and him fight", etc.). I'd think more of you if you'd do your trick without cheap shots such as ignoring facts. And it is a fact that all the above info was available to you--some while you were still a member and later while getting the usual lame-duck issues before cutoff.

MAY 16, 1977

'THIS IS TO INFORM YOU THAT NUMEROUS COMMENTS APPEARING IN YOUR MAGAZINE SCIENCE FICTION REVIEW, ISSUE #21, PERTAINING TO THE "TRILATERAL COMMISSION," "COUNCIL FOR FOREIGN RELATIONS," "ROCKEFELLER NEXUS," ETC., ARE NOTED WITH EXTREME DISFAVOR BY THIS ORGANIZATION. WE NEITHER DESIRE NOR WELCOME SUCH CRASS PUBLICITY. I MUST WARN YOU THAT THESE INFLAMMATORY PUBLIC UTTERANCES MAY SERIOUSLY JEOPARDIZE YOUR CHANCES FOR MEMBERSHIP. THEY MUST BE STOPPED FORTHWITH IF YOU WISH US TO GIVE SERIOUS ATTENTION TO YOUR APPLICATION.

JOSEPH GREEN  
CHAIRMAN, MEMBERSHIP COMMITTEE  
SECRET MASTERS OF THE WORLD

'Responsible journalists get the facts. Irresponsible ones piss me off a lot.'

I'm afraid your information is wrong, Buzz. My comments in SFR #21 about SFWA were based on the Cogswell candidate flyer (sent to me although I am not a member of SFWA) and information from current, unhappy members.

The last issue of the FORUM I received was #44 (Feb. 76).

And your adroit listing of three issues in eight months does not invalidate the possibility of one issue in five months.

If SFWA would like me to receive correct information (correct "official information" that is) I would welcome being put on the mailing list.

My basic criticism of SFWA is that it isn't worth in services or information the money (\$12.50, last I heard, per year) asked. I found its officers at times insufferably arrogant and elitist, and feel that



of late the top level of SFWA leadership has become second rate. But that's a matter for the membership, of course.

'P.S.: The interdict on Nebula consideration of stories appearing in Ultimate publications has been rescinded.'

Glad to hear it. Thanks for the clarifications and new information.

Well...let me amend my description of Buzz as an SFWA officer. I assume he is. I don't really know for sure.

5-27-77 Currently there is a minor note in a congressional hearing and in a series of reports on NBC and CBS about child prostitution and use of

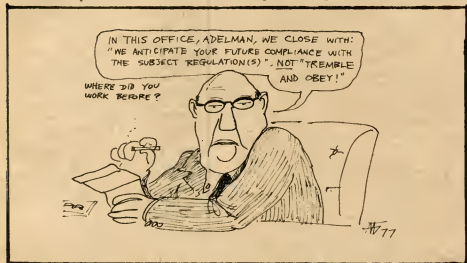
there are calls for new, special laws against these crimes.

Yes, Crime Creation and Enforcement is an Industry. It employs a lot of adults who need jobs and a sweet thirty-thousand dollar income. And I suggest that it is they who are the real exploiters of child commercial sex.

But on to more pleasant topics and a LETTER FROM GENE WOLF:

5/15/77

'In going through SFR #21, I was stopped cold by (what else?) my name in "The Dream Quarter." I'm not quite sure what my friend Barry Malzberg means when he calls me (with Bob Silverberg) "self-exiled." If he means I am no longer writing, or no longer writing sf, he is mistaken,



children in porno books, mags and films.

Yesterday, on the radio, I heard a law officer give detailed instructions (to kids who were listening) on how to turn a trick. And the report told of \$1,000. per night earnings....

This was astonishing to me. Not the existence of "chicken" porno or kid hustlers, but the publicity given the activity and the detailed, enticing advertising.

Right now I'll bet there are new thousands of kids out on the streets trying to sell their bods for some of that heavy dough....and perhaps thousands of new would-be purchasers on the prowl, looking for the new thrill or the kid who will for a price satisfy a hidden, repressed urge and fantasy.

Congress and the media have put on an amazing performance. I can only wonder at the unconscious motives operating. Of course, these men have more or less lost marijuana as a media/political scare subject, so kid commercial sex must seem a great substitute. Now they are busy creating and expanding this new evil. And

which I hope will make him happy. I'm at work on a science fantasy opus whose working title is THE BOOK OF THE NEW SUN, and presently have 900+ pages of manuscript; the whole thing should run at least three volumes.

'Delightful cartoons in this issue, by the way. I was particularly struck by the bagpipe on p. 5, the pen on 9, the wooden leg on 14, the Kirk (although I have seen it before) on 19, the truly marvelous bra on 25, the hubcaps on 46, vanilla on 52, the indescribable thing on 55, and the freeing cop on 70.

'That last reminds me of a short, bitter, true story. This past January when the weather at 9:00 p.m. was -20F with a -60F wind chill, my eighteen-year-old son Roy had a flat tire. He changed it, and he and his date went to a party. On the way back home, about 11:30, he had another flat---apparently the spare was in poor condition. While he and the girl were sitting in the car debating what to do, a police cruiser pulled up. The policeman asked what was wrong, and when they told him

ordered them to get their car off the road and drove away. They walked three blocks to pound on the door of a friend.

'I found your remarks on "Cruel and unusual punishment" (p. 53) amusing; but the real point is that execution deters the person executed. It is the only way to guarantee that a murderer will not be released on society. The fundamental problem is that our culture has no way to make permanent commitments of any kind. What one Judge does another can (and does) undo. The constitution once guaranteed us the right to bear arms (in colonial times, the "militia" was simply the muster of armed citizens) and forbade an income tax. We must kill because we are too merciful to keep anyone in prison for life unless that life is a rather short one; and we won't be able to keep the blood off our hands until we become sufficiently cruel to give immutable sentences to people like Richard Speck.

'You may be interested to learn that my novel PEACE won the Chicago Foundation for Literature Award. I got it at a dinner given April 30--the first and no doubt the last time I have ever entered a room behind trumpeters. A \$500 check went with the plaque; I gave it to Rosemary, and she used the money to buy me a zoon lens and have our bedroom carpeted.

'Congratulations on those extra pages, before I forget. As you have doubtless already noticed, ALGOL has declared itself a prozine---something I and others have been urging on Andy Porter for a long time---leaving SFR and LOCUS in lonely grandure.

'Your review of WIZARDS has firm-ed up my resolve not to see it, though I heard great things from Bev Friend. I walked out halfway through HEAVY TRAFFIC.'

Congratulations to you!

I remember the time Augie and I took my mother to see the second Fritz the cat movie...all that seamy background, sex, cuss words....and mom had been expecting a Disney-type film! Such a tight-lipped, steely-eyed expression all through it.... I should have warned her and Augie. I knew what it would be like, having seen the first FRITZ.

Now, with further thoughts on Aldomet, a LETTER FROM JOHN BRUNNER:  
14th May 1977

'Reading Charles Platt's letter in the latest SFR (#211) makes it plain to me that I didn't spell out some aspects of my argument (in my piece about the effects of Aldomet) ((SFR #20)) as thoroughly as some people might have wished. There are three or four points at which per-

haps I should have been more specific.

'First of all, I do indeed have a tremendous respect for modern medicine and its achievements. Living in a country where, within my lifetime, TB has been reduced from a major killer to a rarity, and having lately read that smallpox has officially been eradicated from the Indian subcontinent (now that's a real triumph!), I could scarcely feel otherwise. But I fear - I fear deeply - that thanks to just such accomplishments, the impression has been allowed to spread within the medical profession that modern chemicals can cope with all modern ailments. This, despite estimates of the number of hospital beds occupied by patients suffering from side-effects of earlier treatment which range, in this country, up to ten per cent...'

'And it was precisely my respect for modern medicine which - to some extent - landed me in the mess I described! I recall very well hearing, on more than one occasion, from friends in the profession how carefully planned courses of treatment with a number of interacting drugs arranged so that each would counterbalance the rest had been doomed to failure by the patients' refusal to continue with them. Pat Hartwell, Dave's wife, once gave us chapter and verse on a whole bunch of her patients in New York who has frustrated her best efforts to stabilize them on a well-designed course of treatment. Therefore, when I started taking Aldomet and noticed some minor ill-effects, I resolved to continue anyhow.

'For a reason I think I ought to have mentioned in my article. I'd been instructed that if I didn't have my blood pressure reduced I might run the risk of cerebral haemorrhage and a consequent stroke. It so happens that that was what carried off my father, and he was half-paralysed until he died. I fear paralysis infinitely more than I fear death; literally, I would rather be dead than paralysed. So here was an additional, and extremely cogent, reason for putting up with the disadvantages of the drug.

'And when they became conspicuous, about three months after I started on the course of treatment (or perhaps a week or two earlier - I don't exactly recall), my powers of reason, judgement and initiative were already debased to the point where I was incapable of figuring out why my behavior was being conditioned by an external influence, rather than deriving from my individual personality.

'To someone on the outside, perhaps someone who has met me in the past, it may appear incredible that

I so totally and absolutely failed to realise what was going on. But that seems to have been what happened. No other explanation can account for it. It is notoriously possible to be addicted to substances that are actively harmful; perhaps my predicament amounted to an addiction-analogue! I don't know - I'm still trying to sort out my very confused memories from the period.

'(En passant, to Charles: yes, I do know that Aldomet is not grouped with the tranquillisers, but according to Peter Parish's MEDICINES: A GUIDE FOR EVERYBODY it has "a complex action on the nervous system", and I think I got tangled up in one of the complexes...)

'What I find most ironical about the whole experience, though, is that I am now stabilised on something which has so far as I can determine -- no side-effects, and I found my way to it myself: dandelion. My blood-pressure showed signs of creeping up again, so my GP said he wanted to put me back on a chemical diuretic, but I said I'd rather try a herbal remedy, and it works fine. Two mugsful of dandelion coffee at breakfast, and the sphyr reading stays comfortably low in spite of my having terrible trouble with my current novel, just the sort of thing I'd ordinarily expect to drive it up again.

'I wish I'd known about this two years ago...'

There was a mental health documentary on ABC last night about radical treatment of "mental illness" by means of drugs, shock treatments, and surgery. The cutting into the brain sequences were gruesome, the shock treatments and subsequent memory losses were frightening...but the long-term permanent effects of the drug therapies were terrifying. And the short-term side-effects of drugs used to quiet patients---uncontrollable body movements...spasms, weird, locked muscle positions...made it clear that much of the "psychotic" behavior seen in mental patients is due to the drugs they are required or forced to take!

Now to a handy gardening tip.

#### LETTER FROM LAURA CAMPBELL

May, 1977

'About your cantaloupes. Did they fail to come up last fall? (In which case I can offer no help.) Or did they rot before they were ripe? If you had trouble once the plants were up, were you watering the crowns? They don't like that. (Growl. Growl.) Plant them on hills



Is and once they are well up, dig a trough around the hill and water by filling this. Keep the ground dry where the flowers are and around the melons (as much as possible in your wetter climate). Try planting them next to your house, a shed or a wooden fence, on the south side. The reflected sun can help. Also melons, cucumbers and squash will cross-fertilize if planted near each other, producing some mighty peculiar produce. The Voice of Experience speaks. If none of this applies, or works, you just have to learn to appease the Melon Gods.'



It's still too damn cold and wet to plant melons. It hailed yesterday, for God's sake.

I do have plans, however, to sacrifice at least one sf fan to the Melon Gods.... Periodically SFR readers visit here, and I don't imagine one small fan will be missed. Perhaps a volunteer? Anyone? It's an easy death: Alter bites you on the leg and his swift-acting venom first numbs your critical sense, then shorts out your desire to read. After that you commit suicide by throwing yourself into a compost heap where you spend your last moments fighting ten foot long earthworms.



I ONLY GROW  
THE BRAST FRUIT  
IN TOWN

5-28-77 A front-page story today impells me to surface some cynical thoughts on our African policy.

The story is about how the black communist leader of Angola, Agostinho Neto, bloodily put down a coup against him and his policies by some of his army leaders.

In essence, he wants to lessen dependence on the Soviet bloc and attract Western investments. His opponents are "extremist" communists who want to stay with Russia.

Curiously, the Soviet news agency, Tass, reported the uprising was staged by "imperialism and internal reaction."

I blinked a little and let my world conspiracy bias have its say.

What if...what if the Rockefeller power locus (in competition with the Rothschild power locus in Europe) is using African native revolution to overturn established ownership of wealth and great natural resources and make it available to itself via licenses to develop, government issued permits, dictator (bribed) concessions...

That would explain our non-intervention in Angola a year or so ago (much more could have been done sub rosa) and it would explain especially why Ambassador Young is allowed and encouraged to make these racist, toadying statements in black African states.

The Rockefeller power locus wants the mineral wealth in Rhodesia, and it wants to control and profit from the wealth of South Africa. The best way to do that is to foster, encourage and secretly fund the black revolutionaries in and surrounding these white controlled and owned countries.

When the white rulers have been run off and/or killed, and the blacks have control of all these industries (and don't know much about operating them, and need foreign help and especially foreign markets/buyers), then the secret backers are rewarded with access to these resources and are given de-facto control of the economies of these new Socialist countries. The black Marxists will be figureheads, agents, puppets. The facade will be anti-American, anti-capitalist. The reality will be effective control by the amoral, ruthless multi-national giant corporations controlled by the Rockefeller power structure. The Rothschild wing of the Secret Rulers of the World will have been mortally hurt, because these heretofore uncontrolled areas of wealth will have fallen to its rival clique.

In America the Rockefellers have hard control of the executive branch of the federal government, but obviously the House and Senate are giving them trouble. Especially the House, whose members, elected every

two years, are much more loyal to their voters.

I suspect that great social and economic turmoil is in store for us, which will require a panic resort to Emergency Powers for the President, which will mean rule by edict...a dictatorship if fact if not in name. Congress will be shown to be dishonest, weak, inefficient... Better the President have the power to cut through all that delay and time-consuming talk-talk-talk and Get Things Done!

I think this is scheduled for the 1980's, if all goes well for the Rockefeller group.

I note that the D-J Industrial stock average dropped through the 900 level on Friday. Inflation is ratcheting upward, interest rates are climbing, as I said they would. Late this summer and this fall should be interesting.

ly known on the West Coast to those who frequent art shows, but he is SUPERB! Ask any fan artist!

Some advice, now, from a M.D., concerning the drug problems recounted by John Brunner and Victoria Vayne.

LETTER FROM NEIL BLUMBERG, M.D.

May 15, 1977

'After John Brunner's column in #20 and Victoria Vayne's letter in #21 I will not be at all surprised when the Pharmaceutical Manufacturer's of America sends you a lifetime supply of plutonium-powered laxatives. Seriously though, the discussion of drug therapy, with perhaps the exception of Charles Platt's response to Mr. Brunner, has been rather hysterical and unprofessional. Mr.



# A comment on Alexis Gilliland's cartooning follows. Everyone likes and admires the multiplicity of Alexis's work in SFR.

LETTER FROM WILLIAM ROTSLER

May, 1977

'I said a lot of this in a letter to Alexis Gilliland recently, but let me say this to you: He's good, and he's getting better! He is literate, goddamnit, and that's rare. If he just learns to soften his line and make it more flexible he should go far. I have decided to add him to the list of people I want to get Fan Artist Hugos. First, Grant Canfield; second, Don Simpson; third, A. Gilliland. It will be hard getting Don a Hugo as he is really on-

Platt's comments on the responsibility of the patient to bring untoward effects of medication to the physician's attention are apposite. And if one's sawbones ignores one's pleas, it behooves one to take the health care megabucks elsewhere. There still is a relatively free market in medicine. How to find a good internist (gynecologist, pediatrician, etc.)? Well, calling up the local medical school department of the appropriate stripe and asking the chairman to recommend someone on his staff is not a bad way. In any case, changing doctors will offend no one and benefit everyone in cases such as have been described by your contributors.

'Ms. Vayne's case is quite poignant. While it is impossible to question another physician's judgement without all the facts, I would

like to point out that stelazine is not in any way indicated for treatment of depression, and certainly not in minor anxiety states or neuroses. The so-called effects upon the mind referred to are probably simply those of sedation caused by most drugs of this class. There is no magic drug, to the best of my knowledge, that would cause "docility and loyalty". The effects Ms. Wayne described could also be caused by any number of other sedative drugs. If indeed she was not suffering from psychotic symptoms (which go far beyond "general depression") the choice of this drug, and its use for four years brings both the physician's and the patient's judgement into question.'

I DON'T BELIEVE PEOPLE WHO  
TELL ME THE DRUG I TAKE IS  
MAKING ME PARANOID AND IM-  
POSSIBLE TO LIVE WITH.  
THEY'RE JUST TRYING TO CHANGE  
ME SO THEY CAN TAKE ADVANTAGE  
OF ME. MY DOCTOR WOULDN'T  
GIVE ME SOMETHING BAD FOR  
ME...OR WOULD HE?

'For those of your readers who would like reliable information concerning drug usage and side-effects, I would like to first recommend finding a good internist, one who is willing to discuss these facts with you. The best source for data is certainly not the PHYSICIAN'S DESK REFERENCE, but rather the definitive text by Goodman and Gilman, THE PHARMACOLOGICAL BASIS OF THERAPEUTICS, Fifth Edition and the biweekly MEDICAL LETTER. Having offered these sources, let me say that the main problem with lay persons attempting to assess their own drug needs is their lack of a physiologic and pharmacologic background in which to rationally evaluate the facts presented in various sources. The clinical importance of some drug effects (both therapeutic and toxic) is minimal and of others is critical to the patient's well-being. Psyching these things out is not by any means always clear cut and the practice of medicine involves a lot of seat of the pants flying based on experience and intuition. That's what physicians are paid to take the responsibility for. If yours isn't making you content, tell him or her, and if the response is unsatisfactory take your needs elsewhere.

'I do hope you will avoid letting your publication become a part-time repository of idiosyncratic and rather unprofessional case-reports of drug-related horror stories. Lord knows, there are enough real ones in the medical literature.'

Thank you for your letter, Doc-

tor. If I'm ever frightened by my symptoms of depression of other neuroses, or high bloodpressure, and of some impaired judgement by these symptoms or fear, I'll know enough, thanks to your advice, to trust a doctor to pick a good doctor for me, and then I'll buy these expensive books and try to subscribe to MEDICAL LETTER (if they'll let a layman subscribe) but of course I'll keep in mind that I shouldn't try to use these books and this medical information because I don't have the training...that is, judgement. I'll trust my doctor, which is where I came in, and if he goofs I'll know that the drugs he gives which dissolve my good judgement are bad because...because...well, I'll know because I'm supposed to know, right? Wrong? Maybe? It was my fault for asking the wrong doctor to pick a doctor? No, no, I shouldn't be ill in the first place? Excuse me, I'm going to take some more Librium, thinking gives me a headache....

#### INFORMATIONAL NOTES----

IRVIN KOCH SAYS:

26 May, 1977

'Beside the Chattanooga story contests I am now manager of the National Fantasy Fan Federation story contest. That means we now have at least \$75. in prizes. In addition, the NSF contest usually has a pro editor as judge, and several winners and entrants have sold their stories. One SASE gets info/entry blank on all contests.

'Irvin Koch  
835 Chattanooga Bk. Bldg.  
Chattanooga, TN 37402'

JAN ELVSEN ASKS:

May, 1977

'I have begun to collect literature to a much larger degree than before, and I am looking for a person in USA who can buy me things for which I send him payment or who wants to exchange products from USA for Swedish products. What I want is comic books, SF and fantasy and things connected to these two genres. This is to be a complement to my orders to larger companies like Richard Witter in New York and Bud Plant in California, to obtain rare items, older material and so forth.

'Jan Elvsen  
Thulegatan 3  
S-633 58 ESKILSTUNA  
SWEDEN'

MONOLOG CONTINUED NEXT PAGE

## AFTERTHOUGHTS ON LOGAN'S RUN

BY WILLIAM F. NOLAN

I wrote "Thoughts On Logan's Run" in June of 1975--and a few things have happened since then: I've sold a TV series, written another Logan novel and plan a new Logan film...

The entire thrust of that original piece (which I wrote before I saw the MGM film) focused around an imaginary interview with producer Saul David, written from the standpoint of "outraged author." I was taking Mr. David to task for all the things he changed or left out of LOGAN'S RUN in its transition from novel to screen.

Yet now, LOCUS and other media publications have reported (accurately) that I have actually entered the enemy camp and written a Logan script (the pilot show for the MGM/CBS television series) with the same terrible Mr. David.

First of all, Saul David is not the man I fictionally portrayed in "Thoughts On Logan's Run." He's got sensitivity, talent, and the guts to hold his ground against big-studio assaults. When MGM attempted to deal unjustly with him on the Logan TV series he left the studio and sued them for two million! (Ben Roberts and Ivan Goff took over as Logan's TV producer-team.)

Saul is now my friend. When he asked me to co-write that Logan pilot with him last year (and he is a writer, having just sold a book to Bantam) I had some reservations. But as I got to know him they quickly disappeared. I found out many "behind-the-scenes" facts regarding the MGM film on Logan. I'm not going to repeat them here because most were revealed in confidence---but I do want to say that I now know that Saul brought to LOGAN'S RUN all the personal dedication he could muster for a script that was, in large part, forced upon him.

He did an honest job with the materials he had to work with, and for that I respect him. Despite many basic flaws, LOGAN'S RUN is a fun film. I call it a "popcorn picture." Good corn. Good fun. It is not the film I would have made, but on its own Saturday-afternoon-matinee level it delivers lightweight entertainment. It is fast, colorful, and handsomely mounted. As a novelist,



UNDERNEATH MY  
VENEER OF SHEER  
ENTERTAINMENT, I  
HAVE LITERARY  
ASPIRATIONS!



I could have been dealt with much more harshly in terms of the final on-screen product.

Saul and I tried to do a good job on the 60-minute TV pilot. Our two names remain on the credits---but I want the record to show---here in print---that our teleplay was heavily rewritten by Ben Roberts and Ivan Goff. I have not seen the answer print, so I can't vouch for its final quality or lack of it---but I refuse to take half the credit (or dis-credit) for this TV pilot.

It is hoped that Saul and I will have much more control with LOGAN'S WORLD, the new sequel-novel I have just mailed off to Bantam. We plan to write the screenplay as a team (as we did the TV pilot) and to co-produce, giving us major control over content and production. (Writers always tell you out here in the industry that the only way to control the quality of your material is to direct it as well as write it. Non-sense. The only real way is to produce it as well as write it. Then the director works for you! I am, in fact, putting together another co-producing deal for a TV show I'm writing at the same time I'm prepping LOGAN'S WORLD.)

With the Logan film sequel we'll be working outside MGM. Just as FUTUREWORLD, the sequel to WESTWORLD, was produced beyond MGM, its parent studio. I control all rights to LOGAN'S WORLD. At the moment, as we are developing the property, we have no firm tie-in with any studio, but this will be worked out in due course. The main point of what I write here is to clarify my relationship with a decent, talented man, a man of honor---and to declare, loud and clear, that I take no creative responsibility for the current CBS

Logan television series. I am not writing any of the segments (contrary to reports), having made my position on this very clear at the outset with the producers---and I have absolutely no connection whatever with story content or production.

My novel, LOGAN'S WORLD, will be published by Bantam in mid-October. This I take full responsibility for. Love it or damn it---it's all Nolan.

And that's it for now. Remember gang, Logan lives!

\*\*\*\*\*

5-31-77 \*Gmnnnnnnng!\* The Oregon state legislature is now favorably considering passing a bill which would make it semi-legal for every person in Oregon to grow two marijuana plants for his own use.

Semi-legal means growing two plants would be a minor misdemeanor, instead of a felony as at present. Three plants, though, and the price gets very high.

This puts the police in a strange position. Will they really bother with arresting and spending court time on a minor pot-growing bust?

The legislature wants to totally decriminalize small (for personal use) marijuana possession/growing, but hasn't quite got the guts. So they are into this weird misdemeanor/felony dichotomy.

On the obscenity front, a reader in Dallas sent me an editorial from the Feb. 10, 1977 DALLAS TIMES HERALD (a very conservative paper, I am told) which shows a remarkable tolerance for pornography. It decries the Cincinnati trial of Larry Flynt, publisher of HUSTLER, and his conviction and sentencing to 7 to 25 years, \$11,000 fine, and denial of bail on appeal---'a sentence heavier than is meted to many murderers.'

The editorial also quotes a telling observation by Flynt:

"MURDER IS A CRIME, BUT WRITING ABOUT IT ISN'T. SEX IS NOT A CRIME, BUT WRITING ABOUT IT IS. WHY?"

Perhaps the conservatives are beginning to see that freedom is indivisible, and if they want freedom in the marketplace, they'd better support freedom in the head. (Yes, that's a pun.)

# I have another bitch: the Supreme Court voted 5-4 to restrict the power of cities to dictate which family members may live together.

The justices ruled unconstitutional an ordinance in East Cleve-

land, Ohio, that denied some members of the family a right to live with others in a single-family house or apartment. An East Cleveland grandmother challenged the law after she was convicted and ordered to pay a fine of \$25. and to spend five days in jail!

My outrage is not that the Supreme Court decided this incredible law unconstitutional, but that it was so close: 5 to 4!!

The ordinance defined family as the parents and any unmarried children. If any of the unmarried children had a child, that was okay. But mothers and fathers of the parents were verboten. And of course married children couldn't live with their parents.

No mention was made concerning the size of the house or apartment. The parents could have a mansion of 40 rooms, and still be breaking the law if they allowed their retired or ill mothers and fathers to live with them.

Christ on a crutch.

There seems to be no limit to the arrogance of local and state and federal government. And no limit to the crap citizens will take from their elected officials.

I wonder if the moralistic politicians of East Cleveland thought of this: they are encouraging illegitimacy, since by their ordinance an unmarried girl child can have a baby and still live in the family home...and her girl child, in turn, can have an illegitimate child...Further, if an unmarried girl child has a child, doesn't that make her parents grandparents? Shouldn't they be forced out of their home as illegal residents? And fined? And sent to jail? Or does an illegitimate grandchild make them illegitimate grandparents and thus safe?

We live in a madhouse.

# STAR WARS, from all accounts, is a roaring, runaway hit picture, sure to push aside JAWS, THE EXORCIST, perhaps even THE GODFATHER as top-grosser of the year, etc., etc.

STAR WARS, a well-done juvenile space opera, is becoming a Phenomenon. All hail. It is the fruit of STAR TREK. It is evidence that all these years of kids-reading-sf and gradually improving sf movies has paid off. The success of STAR WARS assures a new crop of TV science fiction, a new crop of big budget sf movies... Maybe even a return to TV of STAR TREK, with Kirk, Spock, Scottie, etc. all in their forties and fifties, losing credibility as they try to be young again, as their makeup crumbles....

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MONOLOG CONTINUES ON PAGE 46

# AN EVOLUTION OF CONSCIOUSNESS



TWENTY-FIVE  
YEARS  
OF  
WRITING  
ABOUT  
WOMEN  
IN  
SCIENCE FICTION

BY MARION ZIMMER BRADLEY

I have been writing science fiction now for almost a quarter of a century. My first sale, in 1952, was a very short story called FOR WOMEN ONLY, and I had written it largely for my own pleasure; I hadn't seriously expected to sell it. It's a sad strange little piece and, reading it over at 25 years removed, half a lifetime away from the girl just out of her teens who wrote the thing, I find I have no idea what it's really about.

It's told in first person by a woman; actually an android, who, to medical surprise and consternation, has conceived and borne a child:

"They aren't going to let that thing live, are they?"

"No, of course not... it's just kind of a scientific freak, they want to study it awhile."

Unable to face the implications of this overheard conversation, the female android disconnects herself.

When I wrote, and sold, this story, there were not many women writing science fiction. C.L. Moore, collaborating voluminously with Henry Kuttner, had ceased entirely to publish under her own name. Leigh Brackett still did, but she wrote in much the same way as any other writers from PLANET STORIES; the heroes in her stories were all big tough macho types and the women were beautiful, and very few of Leigh's stories gave a clue to her feminine authorship. Recently Pamela Sargent, in WOMEN OF WONDER, has criticized Leigh for this, saying contemptuously, "She writes like a man, and a man steeped in machismo at that." This simply reveals Sargent's total ignorance of the facts of life in the market and science fiction at that time. Most of the readership of science fiction -- an estimated 95% -- were men. The few who were not, were women who had no interest in the fiction supposedly proper to women, dull domestic tales about women hunting for husbands, jewelry or household goodies in suburbia. These stories bored me -- as they bored Leigh before me -- to tears; we fled to science fiction to read, and later to write, about people actually doing things. Therefore, perforce, I read stories by, and about, men, because in those days women didn't do interesting things, in or out of fiction. In those post-World-War II days, even Rosie the Riveter had been banished back to the kitchen. I am sure that some women who discovered during the war that they could do things, were asking themselves how women in America were really better off than if the Germans had won and



sent the women back to kinder, kuche  
und kirche.

So I read science fiction about men. But when it came to writing it, I knew I wasn't going to sell much of it anyhow, and so, while I was learning my craft, I wrote several stories in which women played a major part. I even sold a few of them and my first big sale, in 1953, was Centarus Changeling, an almost completely woman-oriented story. The Earthwoman, Beth, has become pregnant on a world where no Earthwoman has ever borne a living child; her friend, the mutant Cassiana, breaks the taboo and helps Beth to reach a successful end to her pregnancy.

Modern feminists would probably shudder at this story. I wrote it honestly, with my deepest convictions, and it contains such statements as the following:

'A woman's got to be damned abnormal to be conscientious about contraception.'

Because I hungered for children, lots of them, and like Beth, I was denied them. This story was also said to have lesbian overtones. I'm not so sure I see it myself, but it certainly did emphasize strong emotionalized friendship between women, which was, and is, vanishingly rare in science fiction. The story found its way into a Checklist of Lesbian Literature. There is no physical contact between the women except for weeping in one another's arms, but I am sure the emotional overtones are there.

As I said, these women -- eager for babies, preoccupied with their homes and children -- would make a modern feminist shudder, and in 1976 I am a little surprised at them myself, but then, I am no longer baby-starved. However, these women do differ greatly from the usual heroines of male-oriented science fiction; despite their love affairs, babies and domestic concerns, they act for and of themselves, without reflecting the will of the men in the story. Beth defies the orders of

her husband not to become pregnant, because she herself wants a child -- and because, hating the round of socially obligatory duties of a Legate's wife, she welcomes the necessary isolation of pregnancy on this world. And Cassiana breaks the taboo and assists Beth to bear her child safely -- defying her husband -- because she feels this will minimize the hostility of the Megarean natives against the Terrans who cannot bring their wives and children there and are thus isolated from the mainstream of life in Megaera.

The first couple of novels I wrote and sold were blatant imitations of the stories in the men's pulp; I'll discuss them in a minute or two. But about that time I wrote two long novels almost entirely concerned with women. The first, a fantasy about the Temple of Light in Atlantis, dealt with two sisters, daughters of the High Priest. I called it THE WEB OF DARKNESS, and from that day to this, it has been read only by my loving family, and by a stream of editors, none of whom could be induced to publish it. The second was a hard-core science fiction novel about the first moon flight; according to a theory then current about the superior physical stamina of women, it dealt with a crew entirely composed of women, an arrangement made in secret, with a "dummy crew" of men for publicity purposes, while the women made the real flight.

The science of this one -- since I based it on research I did not know to be already obsolete -- was shattered beyond repair by the first orbital flight containing live animals; WINDOW ON THE NIGHT went into the bottom drawer, never to return. Periodically I toy with the idea of salvaging the inept scene for a TV play or something...some day.

But I had done it. I had written a serious, major novel whose main characters were all women and all scientists: medics, radiologists and female test pilots. I still like the book and wish I could revise the characters for a current one. And at one point, when a member of the crew has been killed and they are debating a replacement member of the crew who has been turned down for being "not quite a normal woman," the brilliant woman aerodynamics experts says:

"Let us have done with this nonsense. If they want normal women, ordinary women, they would not have chosen any one of us, no, not one. Of course, Nina is not an ordinary woman; she is an expert in space medicine.

Fern is not a normal woman; she is not going to Ascot and giving tea parties and opening bazaars; she is here testing our jets. There is not one of us that is normal. Anne is not normal or she would be teaching freshmen at her college and marrying her professor. I am not normal or why am I not home in Bermuda teaching my little daughter to read in her primer? We do not want normal women here, we want qualified women for what we are doing. Nina is one of us; she should never have been rejected, and now she must return to us."

Feminists would debate this meaning of normal, but when I wrote this passage I was being bitterly sarcastic about the mood of the fifties, which Betty Friedan, ten years later, was to identify as the "Feminist Mystique."

But with the failure of both WEB OF DARKNESS and WINDOW ON THE NIGHT to find publication, I realized that if I were going to write for anyone's edification other than my own, I would have to write about men; I would have to write novels with heroes rather than heroines. This was simply the rules of the game, the economic facts of life in the market.

My first salable novel was about a group of men and women from an alien world, marooned here, and the object of search by a Galactic Observer, who must find them before they adapt too far and disappear forever into Earth's population. It was the last book I wrote for ten years in which the women were as important as the men; Clea, one of the seven-marooned aliens, intensely resents the efforts of Reidel, the only competent adult male in the group, to assume the automatic leadership into which Earth-normal society forces him.

BY ME, STUDS ARE  
SOMETHING YOU NAIL  
TO THE WALL.



My two first market-oriented sales were simply imitations of the pulp fiction of the late forties and early fifties. FALCONS OF NARABED-IA, a far too blatant imitation of Kuttner fantasy, was about a hero abruptly catapulted into an alien world, tempted by the glamorous women. In these imitative Merrittesque fantasies the women were all creatures of exotic beauty and, I fear, very little brains or character. This is how Mike Kenscott sees the evil Karamy....

"A golden woman...golden hair, tiger-tawny, fell like silk around her shoulders; her eyes were wide and fixed on me like the eyes of a great cat..."

"Karamy, gold and fire, walked along the winding path between the trees. She was all gold. From the flowing crown of her hair to the tips of her sandalled feet she was all a burnished shimmer. There was amber on her brows...and her smile was a dream. Great beauty has a stunning effect. It paralyzes other emotions..."

I will spare you any more excerpts of my far-too-purple prose. We discover later that Karamy is evil...but neither I nor the readers ever found out what she had done that was so evil. She was there, and she was evil, because one of the conventions in this kind of fiction was to have the hero tempted by an Evil Sorceress. There was also a Sweet Young Thing, and he wound up staying in this world, after the Evil Sorceress was destroyed, with the S.Y.T. I can't imagine why he bothered.

If FALCONS was bad imitation Kuttner or Merritt, THE DOOR THROUGH SPACE was worse imitation Leigh Brackett/Raymond Chandler, with a tough-guy hero and tough-guy dialogue. He resembles the parody "The Bloody Drip" in POGO, more than anything else, and he too was led around on long meaningless chases by visions of a Beautiful Girl:

"She was slight, with waving hair like spun black glass...a black glass belt bound her narrow waist like clasped hands. Her features were delicate, chiselled, pale...all human, all woman, but set in an alien and unearthly repose. The great eyes gleamed red...the crimson lips curved in inhuman malice."

We never find out where this girl comes from, or why she is leading the hero around this way, but she has a twin sister, and the sis-

ter is Something Else:

"Along the flagged walk at the edge of the square, as suddenly as an autumn storm in the salt flats, a woman came walking...she was tall, with a proud swinging walk and a metallic clashing that kept rhythm to her swift steps. Her arms were fettered, each wrist bound with a jeweled bracelet, the bracelets linked together with a long silver-gilt chain passed through a silken loop at her waist. From the loop swung a tiny gold padlock, but in the padlock stood an even tinier golden key, signifying that she was of higher caste than her husband or consort, that her fettering was by choice and not by command..."

There is a lot of this bondage stuff, and -- years before I even knew the phrase "sado-masochist" -- a scene where Race is tortured by the woman Dallisa. He treats her Real Tough for the beginning; for instance, when she first speaks to him, she asks -- a reasonable question under the circumstances -- where he has come from and what his business is, and he replies without skipping a beat:

"I have come to buy women for the brothels of Ard-carran. Perhaps when washed you might be suitable. Who could arrange for your sale?"

They wind up in bed together -- my first venture into the overt sexuality of all the women in my fiction, which was a completely new departure in those days when someone called science fiction "almost obscenely sexless".

"During the night sometime, while her dark head lay on my shoulder, I found myself wakeful. The throbbing of my bruises had little to do with my sleeplessness; I was remembering other chained girls from the old days in the Dry Towns, and the honey and poison of them distilled into Dallisa's kisses..."

Later, Dallisa appears, not as a mere symbol for the male protagonist's lust, but as having independent fears and hungers:

"Race, Race, our world is dying and I will die with it....Miellyn broke away, but I cannot, I dare not. Our world is rotten to the

core, and I'm as rotten as the core of it. I could have killed you today and I'm here in your arms..."

"I had hated and yearned and starved for this, and when I found it it turned salty and bloody on my lips like Dallisa's despairing kisses..."

But Dallisa is trapped, too, like Race who discovers disillusion: her fierce and sadistic independence is an illusion:

"I said goodbye to her alone in the reddish, wind-swept space before the Great House...she pressed her head to my shoulder and whispered, "Take me with you!"

"For answer I picked up her narrow wrists...on some self-punishing impulse she had shortened the chains so that she could not even put her arms around my waist. I kissed the punished wrists and whispered, "You don't want to go, Dallisa..."

"I was desperately sorry for her. She would go down with her dying world, proud and cold and without any place in the new one. She kissed me and I tasted blood, her thin fettered body straining against me with convulsive sobs...then she turned and fled back into the shadow of the great dark house.

"I never saw her again."

After twenty years, when this perverse girl is almost all I can remember of DOOR THROUGH SPACE, I find little profit in speculating how I came to writing anything so sick and strange. I suppose it is futile to wonder if, in Dallisa, chained and savage in the Dry Towns, there was anything of my own younger self, trapped and hating in the wilds of Texas, without courage to break free from a hopelessly bad marriage. For whatever reason, it was the best part of twenty years before I tried to write again of the chained women of the Dry Towns.

In the next few years I wrote a variety of short stories and novellas, most of them space-adventure fiction without any women of any kind in the stories. If there were few independent strong woman characters, at least there were no mad scientists' daughters who had to be dragged out of the gaping maw of bug-eyes monsters. DEATH BETWEEN THE STARS -- reprinted in the collection THE DARK INTRUDER AND OTHERS -- dealt with a courageous



spinster who broke the taboo against sharing quarters with a nonhuman, and was duly rewarded. CONQUERING HERO contains passim the story of a female psychologist who encourages a young, sheltered mutant boy to attempt independence. And my best-known story, THE WIND PEOPLE, has for a protagonist a woman doctor who remains alone on an alien world rather than agree to destroy or abandon her infant son.

The first written of what was to become the "Darkover" series of novels was THE PLANET SAVERS, originally a novelette in AMAZING STORIES. The hero was a Terran medic with a multiple personality; one, Jay, an uptight Terran doctor, the other, Jason, a rowdy, adventurous mountain climber. There is only one female character: the Free Amazon, Kyla n'ha Raineach, and in creating her I departed once and for all from the uselessly ornamental women of the early books, who were there to goad on the hero to accomplishment. Kyla is a free-lance mountain guide, paid to lead seven men through the Heliers, and Jason's first reaction is negative:

'I almost backed out when I saw the guide. For the guide was a woman. She was small for a Darkovan girl, and narrowly built, the kind of body that could have been called catlike, or boyish, but certainly not, at first glance, feminine. Her nose was snubbed and might have looked whimsical, and was instead oddly arrogant.'

Jason displays concern about her feminine status and is thoroughly snubbed by the Amazon:

"Kyla, you'll be one woman among eight men..." The snubbed nose wrinkled up. "I don't expect you to crawl into my blankets, if that's what you mean. It's not in my contract -- I hope!"

"I felt my face burning. Damn the girl! 'It's not in mine anyway...but I can't answer for seven other men, most of them mountain roughnecks!" I wondered why I bothered. Certainly a Free Amazon could defend her own virtue, or not, if she chose, without my help.

"In any case you'll be a disturbing element..."

"...Jason, I'm a Free Amazon. Have you any idea

what that means? No, I'm not neutered, though some of us are. But I give you my word I won't cause any trouble of any recognizable female variety."

And of course she doesn't, fighting alongside the men, and being wounded as they travel among the trailmen. Later she works with Jason to keep his alter ego from surfacing, and though in the end she remains with Jason, one feels it was very much on her own terms. I resisted temptation to bring Kyla on stage in later books, but I did mention, in WORLD WRECKERS, how their affair had ended, when Jason tells David Hamilton:

"I loved a Free Amazon once...in many ways it was like loving another man."

"I thought they only loved other women."

"Oh, no. But they do as they please, and no man holds one of them for long. Kyla stayed with me for three years, and that was a long time, for a woman who had no child."

Although independent of speech and action, the women in the early Darkover novels are subordinate to the men, and the action centers upon the male protagonists. In SWORD OF ALDONES, the Keeper, Callina, shows flashes of independence, arguing with the Council:

"...Is a keeper to be bartered away like a shawl in the marketplace?"  
"...Linnell is my ward, and her marriage is not a matter for Council meddling!"

It was in this book that I first began to outline the predicament of the Comyn Keepers, vowed to virginity as a side effect of handling the matrixes, or psi jewels. Callina allows herself to be maneuvered into a politically based marriage with a man she has never seen, but refuses to allow Lew, whom she loves, to touch her:

'Her hands went out blindly to push me away. "I can marry Beltran -- and still keep my powers to aid you, and the Comyn -- only because I do not love him! Do you understand?"

"I did. I let her go and stood looking at her in consternation. Matrix work for a man has its frustrating elements. But I had never stooped to think -- more accurately, had never cared a damn -- what particular refinements of hellishness it might have for a woman.'

The other female character, Dio Ridenow, shows her independence in the usual way for women in such pre-liberation books, by taking Lew Alton as a lover in defiance of the rigid Darkovan codes for propriety among women, as by wearing men's clothing for riding, which shocks the prudish hero.

In the third Darkover novel, THE BLOODY SUN, I followed, again, the fantasy pattern of Rider Haggard and A. Merritt by contrasting two female characters; one timid and virginal, the Keeper Elorie; and the pert Taniquel, independent of speech and action. I recently realized that in Taniquel I had created the first truly independent woman in science fiction. Not the first in a book written by a woman, but the first ever in science fiction to have, not only a love life, but an independent and self-determined sex life.

Taniquel, who chooses lovers where she will, an empath and strongly emotional, is drawn to Jeff Kerwin by his loneliness and need; her love and affection help make him part of the circle, but after he has found his place, she deserts him -- temporarily -- for his enemy in the circle, Auster. Jeff reproaches her with this, and Taniquel defends herself vehemently:



"Jeff, Auster needs me, can't you see that? This is your triumph and his defeat... what has it to do with you and me, that for tonight Auster should need me more than you do?"

When Jeff angrily calls her "bitch", Taniquel flies into a rage:

"You Terrans think women are property! I belong to myself, do you hear? Yes, I love you, but not when you behave like this!"

Jeff's comment, "That kind of love I can buy in the spaceport bars!" makes permanent the rift between them.

Elorie, the Keeper, is made of different stuff; a Keeper, conditioned not to react to men in any way. Nevertheless, she does react to Jeff:

"He had always been aware of Elorie's innocence -- the childish way she showed affection to the men in the Tower; confident in the taboo which protected her, she was like another man, or a child."

"She had accepted Jeff in the same innocent, unwary way -- and he had betrayed the trust!"

It is to Elorie that Jeff finally gives his heart, and the last half of the book tells of their love affair, their mutual exile from the Tower, and Elorie's fight to regain her powers and her right to return and work again as a matrix technician.

STAR OF DANGER, the next Darkover novel, contains no women whatever, which seems the simplest way to avoid conflicts about it. I was beginning to realize that I had saddled Darkover with a pretty vicious sexist/patriarch culture, but it was ten years before I could figure out how to change it! Or, rather, to change my own way of writing about it.

In the fifth Darkover novel, WINDS OF DARKOVER, I created my first genuine female protagonist. Melitta of Storm, her mountain castle captured by the bandit chief Brynat Scarface, one brother wounded in a dungeon, another blind, and isolated behind a psi barrier and her older sister raped and summarily married to the bandit leader, must take on herself the burden of rescue. She escapes by a hair-raising climb down the castle wall to gain access to a room with a secret passage, travels alone to Carthoon, and defies Dry-Towners who of course think she should be in chains.



I was not sure how Don Wollheim at Ace would react to a novel dealing entirely with a woman's adventures, so I hedged my bets by plotting the book so that alternate chapters followed the adventures of Dan Barron, who for part of the story, was overshadowed by the consciousness and will of the blind Lord Lorn, who travels in Barron's body to join Melitta in Carthoon.

The other female character, Desideria, a Keeper at fifteen, makes, unaided and in defiance, the decision to aid Melitta and Storm which her guardian, Lord Kermiac of Aldaran, will not make. When Melitta asks if Desideria will be allowed to raise the forge-folk to aid them, Desideria replies without compromise:

"Anyone trained as I have been trained does not ask leave to do what she feels she must."

I had proved, at least to myself, that it was possible to write of women within the confines of the adventure novel, and that in special circumstances, even women reared in the anti-feminist culture of Darkover could act with courage, decision and independence. (This should not be surprising. Even in the Middle Ages, when the official Church theology was doubtful whether women had souls, an Eleanor of Aquitaine could influence three kingdoms.)

But the creation of one or two independent heroines did not solve the problem of why I had created the society that way in the first place. While I was struggling with that question I wrote WORLD WRECKERS,

dealing in large part with the chieri of Darkover, an ancient race of beings supposed to have interbred with the Comyn, and being, like Tolkien's elves and the Fairy Folk of ancient legends, uncannily beautiful. They also were both male and female.

There were many women in this book. Missy, the half-chieri, ignorant of her heritage, has used her female phase to become a kind of super-courtisan, using her chieri beauty and charisma to induce men to protect and care for her, and fulfill her every desire.

Linnea, a Keeper of Arilinn, lives in more enlightened days than Elorie:

"...living in seclusion for excellent and practical reasons which had nothing to do with morality."

Nevertheless, she throws herself at Regis Hastur when they first meet, and he, not much of a womanizer and certainly at least bisexual, responds to her on a deeper level than any woman before her:

"...women had been attracted to him all his life. Mostly for the wrong reasons, of course, and a telepath could not be ignorant of the reasons. Many had been attracted to him because of his position and power; more had been strongly attracted by his extraordinary good looks...he had grown cynical about women, even while he took what was offered. He knew he could have any woman he wanted, and as a result there were not many he wanted."

"It is clear that Linnea's motives were not the status which she, of a minor house, could gain from bearing a laran heir to Hastur, not even of...wanting him sensually...like most extravagantly handsome men, he had grown very tired of that."

Desideria appears as an old woman in this book; David Hamilton, in close empathic contact with Desideria (and sexually roused by telepathic spillover from Missy and Conner) suddenly senses the ancient woman as she is mentally, and in telepathic contact:

"...A young and lovely girl in a cloud of luminous copper hair lay smiling up at him...David felt his very guts wringed in his agony of desire. David reached out and touched her hand, raising it lovingly

to his lips.

"No," Desideria whispered, "No." He thought she was going to sob aloud, but she didn't. "I'm an old, old woman, David. It wouldn't..."

The blurred perceptions of the physically aging Desideria, and the young girl she had been, as when she still perceives herself, remain between them until, in the orgy scene which ends the book, David finds himself making love to Desideria. I am not sure what I intended to accomplish by this, except perhaps to say that age, like beauty, is in the eye of the beholder:

'What did it matter?

Age, or even sex, at this moment, and to what they were, was irrelevant. He saw the backlash of doubt and regret sweep across the old woman's face; he laughed and kissed her and saw the fear dissolve.'

Minor characters are the Free Amazons Darilyn and Menella. They are "freemates" -- a Darkovan form of marriage I did not get around to explaining fully for a couple of books afterward, and obviously the only one open to homosexual couples. I didn't stress their "marriage"; the book was written in 1970, and the lesbianism was (and is) a stronger taboo in science fiction than male homosexuality. The only disapproval of the two is not disapproval of their partnership, but of the fact that Darilyn is neutered; the chieri who calls herself Andrea, member of a race dying out because of increasing barrenness, reflects:

'It is a strange sight to me: women who might bear children electing of their own free will not to do so. A sign, perhaps, of a sickness between men and women, on any world.'

This, of course, has mostly to do with the racial infertility of the chieri. But Darilyn later confronts Linnea, and Linnea, "celibate by harsh necessity, like all keepers," nevertheless understands Darilyn's choice when she learns that the Amazon is a telepath:

'Linnea lowered her eyes; the condemnation in them was gone, Linnea had been born into a noble family; she could have been given in marriage to a man who could match her own sensitivity, a fellow telepath.'

'Darilyn, surrounded by those who could neither understand nor respect

what she was, had chosen to have her womanhood destroyed by the neutering operation, rather than subject it to a man who would be, to her, only a dumb beast.'

The major problems of WORLD WRECKERS is not of "woman's place" but of gender identity. One commentator referred to this book as a "complex network of gender crises." Twice in this book, a man is faced with the problem of a love relationship with someone of the "wrong" gender. The chieri, Missy, not aware of what she is, or knowing how it operates, has abruptly gone out of female phase and been transformed into a male, and this has driven her into temporary insanity. Conner, her lover, refuses to be kept away from "her", and David, struggling with his own ambivalence about his love for the male-phase Keral, flings angrily at Conner:

"Can't you get it through your head? She isn't even a woman! Or do you have a yen for men?"

'But Conner replies, "Listen, you bastard...it's Missy I care about, need, love. Not the fact that she has a body I happen to like going to bed with. I love Missy...love her. Or him. Or it, if you prefer. Which means I care what happens to her, not whether I can bang her or not. Which is something you evidently never felt for anyone, and I'm sorry for you..."

David backs down and apologizes; and is later enabled to face his own enormous fears about Keral and the future of their relationship:

"Keral needs you and it's not fair to impose your own cultural hangups on him!"

'Keral was Keral, and

he loved her, whatever he was, and it didn't matter.'

I am not sure I understand WORLD WRECKERS even now. I never know what a book is about until I have written it, and sometimes not for years afterward; I did not, until twenty years had passed, even begin to guess why I had created the chained, savage Dallisa in DOOR THROUGH SPACE; nor do I fully understand David, and his fears that, having come to love Keral in male phase, he will not retain his love for the woman in Keral.

Possibly I was trying to discover for myself the essence of maleness and femaleness, and why one person chooses one love object rather than another? Tentatively, and hesitantly, after five years, I wonder if I had been nosing around at the familiar crisis of anyone who has known what it is, to be intensely, passionately involved in a love relationship with one's own sex. That identity crisis is acute enough, but it is nothing, compared to the later crisis when, having redefined one's self as homosexual, and made a commitment of this kind, one again finds the self struggling with an equally sincere, equally passionate and equally irresistible attraction to one of the opposite gender. At this point the bisexual begins to know what an identity crisis is. Heterosexual privilege (if there really is such a thing) has been renounced once and for all; yet the new homosexual identity is threatened, and the very roots of the personality seem to waver and disappear. Most bisexuals must at this point make a choice, strangle one or the other identities and exist thenceforth conventionally as heterosexuals or defiantly as homosexuals. The rare one who insists that both aspects of the self are equally valid, and neither can be destroyed without living a lie, gets no support or sympathy from anyone.

This is tentative. WORLD WRECK-



ERS may in fact be about something completely different. Some homosexuals have interpreted it as an impassioned defense of homosexuality. I have even received hateletters defining it as pornography.

I have received equally mixed messages on the book which immediately followed *WRECKERS; DARKOVER LANDFALL*. When I started this book, I hoped to discover, by the act of writing, why I had given *DARKOVER* such an overwhelmingly sexist/patrist background. I had begun writing books about the conventional universe of the adventure-story writer, without thinking much about it; a world where men are brave and beautiful women exist to be rescued from the science-fictional equivalent of dragons. But unlike the traditional male science fiction writer, the R.E. Howards, the Michael Moorcocks and Lin Carters, I could not simply go on writing about such a world without thinking much about it. I felt compelled to find out why it should be so, why I still felt it was a rational universe, how a "lost" Terran colony became a society like *DARK-OVER*?

I started with the knowledge that emancipated, self-sustaining women, during the years of the hippie explosion, joined communes which put them back to bearing their babies by natural childbirth and baking their own stone-ground whole wheat bread. In the confessions of one such woman I read:

"I who had been an emancipated woman since I was fourteen, now wanted nothing more than to be a sincere, authentic, clear-eyed, organic Earth Mother."

I also knew that historically, frontier societies and those who live under primitive conditions tend to overprotect and idealize women because of their scarcity, and their irreplaceability as childbearers. In the years when women were working like slaves in the cotton mills of overcrowded, spinster-thronged New England and being bought and sold in the indigo and cotton plantations, the American frontier developed social codes where a man could be summarily shot for unwelcome attention to any woman. Whores and petty thieves from the stews and Bridewells of old England were shipped out to Australia to become cherished and protected wives of newly-wealthy sheep farmers and gold miners.

This makes sense. Men can take over every other social function known -- but not this one. Women bearing children in primitive society, as survival statistics show,

have a risk to bear more major even than that of war, and since they are already bearing the greatest risk known to mankind, it makes sense to protect them against all other risks. And, of course, a "protected" class quickly becomes an exploited class.

This book has been attacked as being "viciously antifeminist" because the self-determined women of the crew accepted their new role as childbearers. I don't think this is necessarily unlikely. I was not, after all, depicting an ideal, or even a very desirable society, nor was I suggesting that the colony made the right choices; I was simply exploring a way in which *DARKOVER* could have gotten there from here. The free manners of the Second Empire gave way to the neurotic anti-sexuality of the Victorian era. The 1840 upswing of free-love communes such as the Oneida community gave way to a world in which piano "limbs" were draped.

Much of the attack was centered upon the character of Camilla Del Rey, second officer of the starship, who became pregnant against her will and was denied an abortion. Certainly my own emotional bias was involved, but it seemed to me that necessity and the needs of the society would, and should, override one woman's personal prejudice, which was, as I tried to make clear, based on her own conditioning. After all, the society had no further need of that woman's technological skills, and it did need her function as a bearer of children; the problem was, should she be allowed to refuse to bear children to further a career which had ceased absolutely to exist? I said no. Other women would have had other answers, but it was my book.

Camilla's story to me had a reasonably happy ending. She had found stimulating and challenging work in the weather station, and she was able to find other childless women to



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poster and care for the children in whom she had little interest. To me her story is not a tragedy, but a triumph. I was not, after all, trying to provide wish fulfillment dreams for liberated women, but trying to display the way in which, under the stimulus of necessity, a woman might be forced to rearrange her priorities.

The character of Camilla arose, to a great extent, from a letter I once received from a woman friend who did not want children, had had one through an accidental contraceptive failure, and said she would never have another:

"...except for a post -A-bomb catastrophe or something like that where my reproductive capabilities were needed. I wouldn't of course, refuse, then; it would be a matter of race survival. But I wouldn't choose to have another, barring such a catastrophe."

After three years of second thoughts, spurred by the intense feminist attacks on DARKOVER LANDFALL, (many of them, I think, read the scene where Ewen denies Camilla an abortion, and simply tuned out on everything else I wrote, since feminist rhetoric insists that abortions are Always Good), I would make only one change in the novel. I would have the statistics of survival spelled out to Camilla neither by Moray nor by Ewen, but by the women of the New Hebrides commune, who long for children and are realizing that too many of them will be sterile, will miscarry, will lose their children at birth, pleading with Camilla, whom they perceive not as she sees herself -- victim -- but as one of the lucky ones who can become pregnant and bear her child to term. The perspective of this scene would make it clear that any one of these twenty or thirty women would willingly change places with Camilla, and emphasize the dramatic irony of the one woman in the crew who does not desire children, being uniquely able to bear them. I would also make clear something which I felt was clear, but which I discover, on re-reading the book, was buried in other smaller details: that there is one side of Camilla which wholly accepts her love for Rafe and the knowledge that she will have children, the scene with Harry Leicester where she says:

"If I live...if we both live...I'd like my next child to be yours. It's going to be necessary, genetically, for women to have children by different fathers...but my reasons

aren't as cold and unemotional as all that."

The women who attacked this book I think, fell into a common trap; that success in life is, and should be, nothing more than personal happiness. And in the next DARKOVER book, SPELL SWORD, I invented a proverb to articulate how I felt about that:

'The world will go as it will, and not as you or I would have it.'

In writing SPELL SWORD I found I was tired of "problem" books. I wanted to write a nice, straightforward adventure story. Callista, kidnapped by catmen, was also barricaded on the psi levels from her kinsmen and could reach only the mind of the Terran Andrew Carr; she guides Carr, lost in the mountains of DARKOVER, to the home of her family, where he helps in her rescue.

Callista, though, in spite of her "damsel-in-distress" predicament, behaves throughout with strength and courage. When Andrew reproaches her for the deaths of the other men in his crashed plane, she retorts:

"I did not call them; they came where their work and destiny led them. Only you had the choice to come, or not to come, through my call; you chose to come, and to share whatever fate their destiny held. Their time is ended and their destiny was never at my disposal. But you I can save, if you will hear me..."

and on a later occasion she appears at Andrew's side during sleep. Believing she is there in reality, he reaches out to touch her, but of course she is only an astral presence and she is even able to make a joke about it:

"Ah, this is sad! The first time, the very first, that I lie down with any man, and I am not even able to enjoy it!"

After her rescue, instead of collapsing into Andrew's arms, she takes an immediate hand in helping to destroy the Great Cat. The other woman in the book, Callista's twin sister Ellemir, is described by Damon Riderow:

"The Lady Ellemir...is not of that fearful kind who start at shadows and lie awake nights imagining bandits in the courtyard when her menfolk are away...the matter is grave,

or she could deal with it on her own."

And when Damon discovers that he has ceased to see Ellemir as his girl cousin and begun to see her as a lover, he reflects:

'So young Ellemir was not. Old enough to care for this vast domain when her kinsmen were away...old enough to have a lover, old enough, if she chose, to marry...he wondered if she had had other lovers. He hoped so. If Ellemir cared for him, he hoped it was based on experience, knowledge of men, not the infatuation of an unawakened girl which might well dissipate when she knew other men...'

This is a far cry from Jeff's angry rejection of Taniel in BLOODY SUN.

About the same time, I wrote two other books which were not DARKOVER novels. One, THE ENDLESS VOYAGE, was the story of an alien race, the Explorers, whose work was to travel at light-speeds seeking out new worlds on which to set up matter-transmitters, cruelly isolated by time-drift from forming any lasting ties outside their own Explorer caste and their own ship. The women of the Explorers did not bear children, being sterile from the hard radiations of space, so that they are forced to adopt children from other worlds. On the Explorer ships no distinction is made between male and female in the operation of the ships, and all Explorers share care and concern for the babies who will be their next generation; the hero Gildoran has a special pet among the children, Gilmarine. At one point Gildoran says "women were supposed to know something extra about children," but quickly dismisses that as a pre-space superstition, and when a female shipmate wonders briefly what it would be like to bear her own children, he is shocked and turns it off flippantly as a joke.

But nobody who read the book -- including those who had attacked DARKOVER LANDFALL as anti-feminist -- seemed to notice that I had written a book completely without sex-roles. When one emphasizes such a theory, one is accused of writing polemic. But when I took it completely for granted, and wrote of a society with no discussion of sex-roles because there weren't any, nobody even noticed.

In HUNTERS OF THE RED MOON, Dane Marsh's group, formed to fight the unknown Hunters, includes two women, again contrasted: Dallith, gentle, frail and timid; Rianma, aggressive

and strongminded. Dane's protective instincts are roused by Dallith; in fact, when he first sees her, captive on a slave-ship delivering them to the Hunters' planet, she is trying to starve herself to death and Dane attempts to persuade her to live, even in captivity. Later when they are bathing together, nude, on the Hunters' world, Dallith -- an empath -- says:

"...we seldom look at one another. It's easier to react to other people by the way they feel to our minds. It's strange to feel people thinking about my body, my image, rather than what I am like inside...am I very ugly, Dane?"

He reassures her that to him she is beautiful.

"And do men of your world judge women only by their looks?"

"I'm afraid so, Dallisa. Of course, the more intelligent ones try to judge women by their other qualities, kindness, gentleness, good nature -- but I'm afraid many men do judge women by whether or not they're good looking."

"And do your women judge men that way?"

But Dane is too embarrassed to answer.

He loves and protects Dallith, but it is Rianna to whom he reacts sexually, and later he fears this will spoil his relationship with Dallith:

"Does she feel I've withdrawn from her? Does she feel too alone?"

"Stop flattering yourself, Marsh. No girl alive is going to go off and die because you make love to someone else."

"But Dallith has no one else. That was why she wanted to die before."

Later he attempts to apologize to her:

"He put his arms around her miserably and said, hiding his face, 'Twish it had been you...'"

"...No, Dane, I wouldn't have wanted it like that, a mindless grab at each other in the face of death, blind, instinctive..." Desolation broke through then, and Dallith began to cry softly.

"But if you couldn't fight it -- if you couldn't -- I

can't bear it that you didn't come to me."

Later he and Dallith do have sex, but he is surprised to find out that he and Rianna

'had shared a deeper intimacy than the sexual contact of the last few weeks.

"Rianna was right, and so was Dallith. It's human in the face of danger, it's natural and even inevitable and nothing to feel guilty about. But it isn't that important either."

And after Dallith's death it is Rianna who makes Dane understand that it was not he who persuaded Dal-



lith to live, but Dallith herself, knowing that her death would make Dane's own fear of death intolerable, who had chosen to live, and destroy herself, rather than dying undamaged and whole as she would have chosen. So that in an adventure story outwardly concerned with a man's attempt to protect two women, a profound reversal of roles; Dallith outwardly the weaker of the women, who assumes the position of psychic nurturer.

Returning to DARKOVER in 1974, I wrote THE HERITAGE OF HASTUR, about two young men of the Comyn -- Regis Hastur and Lew Alton, both minor characters in other books -- independently discovering corrup-

tion in their clan and reacting to it. Much of the "Regis" portion of the book is concerned with Regis' struggle to avoid awareness of his own homosexuality; there are no women in this part, except for his ambivalent relationship with his sister:

'Poor Javenne. She was trapped, too, with nothing ahead of her but bearing children to their clan.'

And Regis, too, does not want to define himself merely as a seed-bearer for their blood. He believes himself to be without *laran*, the telepathic gift; Lew comforts him, saying that after all, his sons might have it, and Regis rejects the idea:

"Do you think that helps -- to know I'm no good for myself, but only for the sons I might have someday?"

Javenne appears in this book as a wholly conventional daughter of the Hasturs, wrapped up in husband and babies, but willing to give up one son to be Regis' heir:

'She had by definition married beneath her, for there was no one of equal rank...and despite her deep love for Gabriel, she had always known that her duty to her clan came first.'

Lew Alton's relations with women are more intricate. Through much of the early part of the book he suffers acutely from emotional (and sexual) deprivation and his cousin, Callina Allard, becomes the focus of this:

'I knew what was wrong, and resented it bitterly that she should remind me from behind the barricade of her own invulnerability. She did not share my needs, desires; it was a torment from which she, as Keeper, was free...in my flaring anger at the girl I forgot the cruel discipline behind her hard-won immunity...I was even barred, being what I am, from the kind of uncomplicated relief which the least of my fellow Guardsmen might have found. The few times -- the very few times -- I'd been driven, in desperation, to seek it, it had only made me sick. Sensitive women don't take up that particular profession. Or if they do, I've never met them.'

Yet when his family attempts to arrange a marriage between Lew and Linnea Storm-Lanart, he refuses angrily. Linnea displays the poise and integrity which later endears her to

Regis:

"Do you really believe that a marriage between you would be unendurable? It is obvious that they will arrange some marriage or other for you."

The question of sex among telepaths is something I have tried to explore since THE SWORD OF ALDONES, although in 1955, when it was written, and even in 1962, when it was printed, much had to be left to the imagination. Later I have tried to explore it in more depth:

'Did he actually think I could manage to live with some woman whose only interest in me was that I could give her a laran son? I know some men in the Comyn manage it. I suppose that almost any two people with healthy bodies can give each other something in bed. But not tower-trained telepaths, accustomed to that full sharing...

'Love -- to put it more precisely, sex -- is never easy for a telepath...for most people, at least for a time, anyone of the right sex and not completely repulsive will do. But...I had always been too conscious of the other party's motives and reactions and they would rarely stand up to so close an examination.'

Later, Lew finds requited love in Marjorie Scott, his half-Terran cousin. Marjorie is described as "not conventionally beautiful," but rather "endearingly young and clumsy," and it is obvious that the immediate attraction between them is the same kind of emotional sympathy as that between Jeff and Taniquel, Andrew and Callista, Regis and Linnea. She rushes instantly to Lew's defense when his cousin Beltrains tries to entangle him in rebel politics:

'Even at Arilinn I had never felt so attuned to any human being. I felt she knew how distressed and weary all this had made me...I could feel her indignation running up her small fingers all along my arm...' "Bob, what are you trying to do to him? He comes here weary from long travel, a kinsman and a guest -- is this our mountain hospitality?" "Robert Kadrin laughed, "Set a mouse to guard a lion!"

Marjorie becomes Keeper of the circle, which means that in spite of the intense sympathy between them, their love is denied any sexual expression. However, aware of the strain this is causing in Lew, she offers to break the taboo:

"Kadarin says it's only a superstition, Lew. I'll -- risk it if you want to. If you need to."

Lew, however, Arilinn-trained and sternly disciplined, refuses:

'I was not at the moment actively suffering because she was forbidden to me, that even a kiss would be unthinkable...

'If I couldn't have reached Marjorie's mind, I'd have gone mad with wanting her, needing her with every nerve in me. But we had this, and it was almost enough.'

Lew's relationship to Marjorie's older sister, Thyra Scott, is more hostile -- and more sexual:

'I'd been angry at Thyra first, not roused by her ...and then I'd been so



overcome by my own need that it would have been easy for me to tear off her clothes and take her there before the fire!"

The ambivalence between Lew and Thyra is continual, but Thyra is seen only through Lew's eyes:

'I had been a fool to touch Thyra. She was still clinging to me...I wanted to thrust her violently away, and at the same time I wanted -- and she knew it, damn her, she knew it -- I wanted what I would have had as a matter of course from any woman of my circle who was not a Keeper. What would have dispelled this hostility and tension. Any woman Tower-trained would have seen the state I was in, and felt responsible...'

And later when the circle is broken and both Kadarin and Thyra

are driven to insanity, Marjorie asks, "You were a little in love with Thyra, weren't you?" and Lew admits, "I desired her."

'But she did not want it; she had tried to fight it. How much had that battle with herself damaged and disrupted her? Had I failed Thyra too? I should have tried harder to help her confront it, face it in full awareness.'

Marjorie's courage becomes apparent only when she and Lew are helpless captives, being used to hurl the powers of Sharra against the Terrans; and here I tried to re-examine the convention, in adventure fiction, that the women are there to be rescued and protected, and that the men are always strong and capable of protecting them:

'I think it was then that I knew...the chilling, total helplessness of true impotence. I could not even protect this girl, my wife, from whatever tortures, mental or physical, Kadarin wanted to inflict...All my life I had been submissive. Willing to be ruled, willing to discipline my anger, to accept continence at the peak of early manhood, to bend my head to whatever lawful yoke was put upon it...I should have made Kadarin kill us there in the stone hut. Then at least she would have died cleanly...'

If Marjorie is no stereotype hero, neither is Lew a stereotyped hero figure, always ready with a sword and arrogance. Men are much the victims of their stereotypes as are women. I find it interesting that HERITAGE OF HASTUR, violating as it does every convention of the machismo-motivated hero-adventure story, found a special championship among the members of LASFS, who nominated it en masse for a Hugo...despite the topheavy male membership of LASFS, and their devotion to conventional hero-type sword-and-sorcery slambang fiction. I am grateful and proud. There is no reason, of course, why women cannot write convincingly of men, but many men are convinced that they cannot.

The most recently published of DARKOVER novels, THE SHATTERED CHAIN, was the first in which I managed to write, and sell, a book entirely about the doings of women.

It is not -- in case anyone should ask -- easy to write adventure stories about women. It's not possible to take an ordinary adventure-story pulp plot, reverse it, and simply make the heroes into hero-

ines. Most of the adventures and quests which men undertake would never be undertaken by any woman. Even Joan of Arc led her armies into battle, not for conquest, but to defend her homeland. So that the first problem is to find any kind of quest which a woman would rationally undertake.

The first woman in SHATTERED CHAIN is Kindra, the Free Amazon, who flings back her hood to display

'close-cropped grey hair and the gaunt pleasant face of a woman in middle years.'

This in itself was risky, a departure from convention. Even C.L. Moore's Jirel of Joiry had been young and beautiful, so that male readers could regard her as an object of fantasy. But Kindra is an older woman, experienced enough to turn aside the lascivious curiosity of the men; she is no swashbuckler, and doesn't allow her women to be. When one of them draws a knife on a man who had only verbally insulted her, she slaps the knife out of the girl's hand and flays her with words:

"Damn you, Gwennis...when I asked for volunteers for this trip, I wanted women, not spoilt children!...your skills were given you to protect against real dangers, rape or wounding, not to protect your pride. It is only men who must play games of Kihar, my daughter, it is beneath the dignity of a Free Amazon..."

In contrast to Kindra, the Comyn Lady Rohana begins the story conventional and timid; she blushes when a Dry-tow loafer, seeing her leaning on Kindra's arm, flings a taunt at them, but even Kindra realizes that, considering Rohana's background:

'...maybe, for her, it took as much courage to cut her hair as for me to draw sword on an enemy.'

Kindra realizes the way in which Rohana has stepped right out of the patterns allowable for a Comyn woman, and Rohana's journey with the Amazons changes her life forever:

'Until she came on this journey, she had never realized how many of her decisions, even small personal ones, had been left to her father or brothers or later to her husband. Even such small things as, Shall I wear a blue gown or a green, or Shall I order fish or fowl for the table tonight, had been dictated less by her own tastes and preferences than Gabriël's

wishes...'

and she wonders:

'Now that I know how to make my own decisions, will I ever again be content to let Gabriël do my thinking for me?'

In the later part of the book, of course, it becomes apparent that she is no longer content to be anything less than wholly independent; although she remains with her husband, it is not from choice, not conventional lack of imagination or courage.

I did skirt, in this book, the previously mentioned taboo on lesbianism. It is obvious that Kindra



and Rohana have undergone a very deep and emotional commitment; but it is nowhere hinted that this is ever given words, far less any physical expression. Princess Jerana sarcastically hints that Kindra is not disinterested in wishing to foster Jaelle:

'The Free Amazons are always eager to take pretty young girls and turn them into haters of men and lovers of women...'

But Rohana refuses to be provoked:

"I know her, Jerana, and you do not."

And later when Jaelle's band is discussing the punishment meted to a pair of prostitutes who have billed an "indecent exhibition" as "Love secrets of the Free Amazon," Jaelle says in boredom:

"I have known since my fourteenth year that there are lovers of women, and that there are pretended lovers of women, and that there are some men who have nothing better to do with their manhood than indulge in nasty fantasies about them..."

Lesbianism, of course, has been the subject of too many male fantasies. A lesbian theme might have been treatable in this specific context, but I had two reasons for avoiding it; the first was that I was already dealing with the major theme of feminism; the second was commented upon in a review, where the reviewer said that to introduce a lesbian theme would have blurred the issue of comradeship between women, as if only lesbians could be loyal to one another, and heterosexual women were inevitably hostile rivals. Magda specifically disclaims such an interest when Peter accuses her of being "emotional" about Jaelle:

"If you believe that, you'll believe anything...do you really think no woman could be loyal to another out of common humanity and integrity?"

Magda, the Terran anthropologist, begins as a conventional woman much like Rohana; doing what is expected of her, coming out of a bad marriage and flaying herself with guilt for its failure, so that when her ex-husband Peter is in the hands of Dark-ovan bandits, and has been written off by his superiors, she volunteers to go alone, disguised (by Rohana's connivance) as a Free Amazon to rescue him. Rohana has passed beyond all convention and is willing to help Magda defy it; but Magda, half Terran and half conventional Dark-ovan girl, cannot sustain the masquerade of a Free Amazon, nor even defend herself, when threatened with gang-rape, from a bandit crew. In confronting a band of real Free Amazons, she becomes aware how far she is from the independent and courageous woman she thinks herself. So that she, too, embodies the theme which Kindra stated at the beginning of the book:

"It is better to wear chains in truth than to wear invisible chains and believe you are free."

Jaelle, fostered from childhood among Free Amazons, thinks herself wholly free; but even she discovers that the Amazon code of life, accepted without thought, will not bring her complete happiness. She finds herself hopelessly enslaved by her infatuation with Peter, though she is unable to give herself to him without seeking counsel -- and in a very real sense, getting permission -- from Magda.

Yet Jaelle is completely independent, having decided what to do. Magda teases her for hypocrisy in not letting the servants find her in Peter's bed, and she replies:



"They know, of course, they always know everything... but if they do not find me there, there will be no one whose business it is to inform Dom Gabriel. And although he probably knows -- he is no fool -- if the servants told him in so many words, he would feel compelled to ask Rohana to reprimand me... and for his peace of mind Rohana would feel she had to come and scold me, though we agreed together when I was sixteen years old that she was not the keeper of my conscience. And she would try not to offend me because I am a grown woman... and I would try not to be rude to her because I love her. And when we had all forced ourselves to say all these things, I would still go on sleeping with Peter whenever I chose..."

I attempted in this book to show the openly sexist culture of Darkover was endurable because an honorable alternative -- an open option, in the form of the Free Amazon's Guild -- existed for women who rebelled. When Rohana expresses horror at the chains of the Dry-Town women, Kindra says:

"I feel no great sympathy for them. Every one of them could be free if she chose. If they wish to suffer chains rather than lose the attentions of their men, or be different from their mothers and sisters, I shall not waste my pity on them, far less lose sleep or appetite. They endure their chains as you, Lady, endure yours... They are perhaps more honest, for they admit to their chains and make no pretense of freedom, while yours are invisible... but they are as great a weight upon you."

Lester Del Rey, in reviewing this book, said I had written "the obligatory feminist novel," but called it "free of polemic." It is, of course, free of the basic statement of feminist rhetoric... the idea that all women, are oppressed, even if they consider themselves to be free. Yet the idea of "invisible chains", in retrospect, a year after the book was published, seems to me, now, to smack of this feminist rhetoric. On the surface, of course, Kindra's flat refusal of sympathy for the chained women of the Dry Towns, saying that they could be free if they chose, echoes my own belief that any woman who has been oppressed by men is the

architect of her own prison, and has merely been unable to defy convention for freedom. Everything has its price, and in my teens I endured unpopularity as the price of independence in a milieu where women weren't supposed to be too brainy. Naturally I had little sympathy for the woman who was too timid, or too eager for popularity, to follow my example.

But THE SHATTERED CHAIN is too recently written for me to know fully what it is really about. I wonder in what perspective I will see this, my first attempt to write wholly about women since the abortive WINDOW ON THE NIGHT, when another quarter-century has passed?

And where do I go from here? I don't think I will ever again be able to write the kind of story where the woman is a passive nonentity, there for the hero to admire -- but then, I don't think, once I stopped imitating Leigh Brackett, that I ever did. Even as early as DOOR THROUGH SPACE, my women were independent and had their own ideas. But they have evolved and changed; and, even more, the climate of science fiction has changed, so that I can now write of them as I always knew them to be; strong, independent, courageous, no longer yielding even lip service to the custom that they must sit and wait for the men to rescue them. I don't have to cover up their strength with a mask of conventional femininity.

And for this I have to thank not only the movement of the times, but my own editor, Don Wollheim, who has never hesitated to let me write honestly about women, provided I told a good story while doing it. He would be enraged, and rightly so, if I tried to write feminist propaganda thinly disguised as fiction, and for obvious reasons he cannot afford to publish fiction which will alienate his entire male audience. Within those limitations, which I accept wholeheartedly -- it's my bread and butter too, and I'm an entertainer, not a political pamphleteer -- I can write as I feel it best, and he has never tried by word or hint to make me write other than honestly.

But my women have evolved, because I have evolved. I have grown, in 25 years; and God willing, after another 25 years (Dame Agatha Christie wrote her last novel at 84!) I will look back on another enormous period of evolution between SHATTERED CHAIN, and whatever unthinkable thing I shall then be exploring in my work. It will be science fiction; unlike other widely publicized writers, I have no desire to desert or "outgrow" science fiction; for me it

holds challenge enough for a lifetime. All the more that I am now free to write as I wish of women, and of all the subjects which were taboo when I entered the field.

I think science fiction is being greatly enriched by its expansion. My favorite editor tells me that a full half of the manuscripts on his desk now have recognizably female names, and that all the good new writers seem to be women. If any woman still believes that science fiction and fantasy publishers are closed to women, she is either gravely misinformed, or she is making excuses for her own incompetence by attributing her failure to editorial prejudice. The prejudice simply is no longer there, in this year of 1977.

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REG NOTE: For those interested in further information about the Darkover series, there is a DARKOVER NEWSLETTER available, published by Ted Bryan, Box 72, Berkeley, CA 94701. Cost is 4 issues for \$1.

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RED SKELTON, IN AN INTERVIEW RECENTLY IN PORTLAND, OREGON, SAID HE THOUGHT THE HEAVY AMOUNTS OF CRIME AND DANGER ON TV WAS DUE TO A CONSPIRACY AMONG THE TV NETWORKS TO SCARE PEOPLE INTO STAYING HOME-- FEARING ROBBERY AND MAYHEM ON THE STREETS--SO THAT THE PEOPLE WOULD BE VIRTUALLY FORCED TO WATCH--TV.

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# Story in the WALL STREET JOURNAL about the causes of crime. A major, unsuspected cause may be something "hidden": what we eat. It seems that allergies can cause strong emotional reactions. Allergy to chocolate or bananas or what-have-you can in some people cause delusions, aggression, paranoia, extreme irritability, physical attack.

Also, vitamin deficiencies of long standing can cause personality disorders. Hypoglycemia (low blood sugar) can cause irrational acts including murder, sex crimes, suicide and...whatever.

Researchers have found that the inmates of most prisons have clear vitamin deficiencies and as a rule favor a diet heavy in sugars, starches, alcohol and nicotine--a formula for creating aberrant behavior and mental confusion.

An early nutritionist, Victor H. Lindlahr used to have a radio program in which he said, "You are what you eat." He may have been far more correct than even he thought.

It could be that one reason why so many of our youth commit crimes is not so much alienation and lack of proper morals or seeing too much violence on TV...could be simply because they were seduced into becoming the Twinkie/Coke/candy generation.

And now, and NOW, a missive from, a communication from...A LETTER FROM AVRAM DAVIDSON:

May 4, 1977

'Thanks...I guess...for SFR #21 .... You would like maybe a FAT story? Well anyway you did like the Dialect. Would you believe it, some people didn't? Go write stories....

'As for the Feud in the Upper Perches of SPFWA, well, I snum. I left that organization a few years ago, and what I could say about that pair of dilly beans would curl your coxycx: but no: that is not my way. My lips are sealed. So don't even ask. My sole comment is, and you may quote me: "Hee Hee. Hah Hah."

'JOHN BRUNNER on the Meddling Moron(s), the ones who always know what you meant to say better than you knew how to say it, and Change your Copy without consulting you. Oh yes. Most of us have got horror stories on that. Even Marse Robert A. Heinlein has suffered at the hands of the Meddling Moron(s). However I happen to believe that at least one MM at whose interfering fingerlock my own deathless prose was dampened must take some sort of cake. This particular MM does not

recognize the existence of the Portuguese language! Thinks that what they speak in Portugal and Brazil is Spanish! Not that I write in Portuguese, I write, it is I think anyway generally recognized, in English. But on the rare occasions when I have referred to Portugal or Brazil I have seen fit to use a very few words in the language thereof. To wit, Portuguese. Because I happen to believe that is the language spoken there. But the MM knew better. I wrote facienda, the MM changed it to hacienda. I wrote fidalgo, the MM changed it to hidalgo. And so on. Says Jno. Brunner, "The type MM is in his/her early twenties and recently graduated from college...." Well, I doubt that it is ever "he." Women, assault at me as you will, it is my belief based upon experience the most painful that this person is always "she" and that "she" has always graduated from one of the fashionable eastern colleges principally for women. As to why the publishers invariably hire these poopsies, I leave to any elementary student of comparative anatomy. This is Nature, I suppose. As to why they do not hire, invariably, intelligent poopsies, can it be that the intelligent ones have found better things to do? Could be.

'Re W. Ritchie Benedict's review of CASEY AGONISTES and Other SF and Fantasy Stories, by Richard McKenna, Benedict says, of McKenna, "It is as if Ernest Hemingway had gone to Tibet and taken a course in mysticism and then began writing science fiction." I feel that I could write an article, a book, a library on Richard McKenna, whose friends called him "Mac." His unexpected death in his sleep at the age of 50 was a loss incalculable not only to literature but to me personally as his friend, and to all his friends, and all who knew him were his friends. I haven't seen the book nor read Damon Knight's intro but Damon was his friend, maybe even Damon was his closer friend: but Damon hadn't been in the U.S. Navy

and both Mac and I had, so there were things.... Ah well. He is dead. And there are stories I will not only never write but I will never even tell. Because Mac is not here to hear them, appreciate them, enlarge upon them, and then to cap them. He and I were going to write a book on the Battle of Santiago Bay in the Spanish-American War, and its aftermath; but Mac's then-agent, Rogers Terrill, urged him not to do it just then but to go on and write another book all his own. And he did. Which was SAND PEBBLES. Which was a fine book, too. Rogers Terrill was old even then and is dead now. And so in Richard McKenna. Who wasn't.

'I observe with odd feelings that back issues from THE ALIEN CRITIC #5 through SCIENCE FICTION REVIEW #20, including one with an interview of me, are all available for purchase. But that the only one which is SOLD OUT is issue #12, which as it happens, carried an interview with Harlan Ellison. I sit and I stare and I brood and mutter and have already bitten off so much of my beard that it is so short many will not recognize me. The only answer which will not stifle mine ego is that "Harlan" bought out all the unsold copies himself. Didn't he? Come on now, REG, didn't he? --- Harlan? Harlan? Didn't you? Didn't.... But I suppose we shall never know.'

((You shall know, Avram! Number 12 was one of the mimeographed editions, and a relatively short-run issue. Having already had 2000 copies reprinted of issues #5, 6, 9, and 10, I concluded that (a) there wasn't going to be enough storage space in this house for all "necessary" back issue reprint editions, (b) there probably wasn't going to be all that much call for increasingly older back issues, and (c) I couldn't afford the printing bills anyway. So by the time you read this #11 and #7 will have joined the SOLD OUT ranks. With #8 and #13 next in line.))

WHY BOYS... YOUR BOOKS  
HAVE COPULATING RHINOS  
ON THE COVERS BECAUSE  
THATS WHATS SELLING THIS  
YEAR.



'And speaking of which. In the interview with me, I happened, amongst sundry wails and moans about my insufficiently-fulfilled career, to mention that I still had three unfulfilled book contracts. And two people wrote in to suggest that that was why my career wasn't, hadn't.... One of them didn't know no better. The other one didn't know anything else, either. Well, gents, and all of you wonderful people out there in Science Friction and Fantasy Reader Land, yezze! all be happy to know that I have by God now fulfilled them all.

'So now we'll see. Won't we?

'Tra la la, then, and Happy Days!'

Stop the presses! I have in my clummy, trembling hands, A LETTER FROM DARRELL SCHWEITZER:

May 12, 1977

'SFR 21 is a good issue. Don't they all say that? ((More or less.)) The interview with Ed Hamilton and Leigh Brackett was wonderful. I met them at the World Fantasy Con in New York and found them both to be charming, friendly people, both with a good sense of humor. They were very good people to interview, as is obvious from the Truesdale/McGuire interview. Both of them opened up nicely and had much to say. My interview wasn't nearly as long as this one, a half an hour, not two. It'll be published in AMAZING. Alas, it is the last anybody ever did with Hamilton.

'Which brings up the matter of his reputation. People remember him for his novels, and the Captain Future series, to the detriment of his short stories. As far as I'm concerned he wrote his best work in the early 60's. "Requiem" is a dynamite piece of work, as is "The Stars My Brothers." "The Pro" (FSF Oct. '64 ---Leigh is in the same issue with, believe it or not for such a lit'rary publication, "The Purple Priestess of the Mad Moon.) is also very powerful, and I suspect a strongly personal statement. I was always hoping he'd write a novel in this vein, but he never did. I've held his best work in high regard for quite a while. He wrote a lot of formula stuff, but the important thing is he also wrote some which was not formula, and as good as anything ever done in the field.

'Wonders will never cease, I guess, because I find myself agreeing with Barry Malzberg to some extent. I'm also dissatisfied with Lester del Rey, although his book reviews never particularly upset me. (As for the point del Rey made about UNEARTH, I don't think it was entirely out of line. Real science fiction has many markets, and once

it gets to the semi-professional level it has surely been picked over rather thoroughly.'

((That might be true if every writer sent every story first to the highest paying markets and then worked downward. But obviously a lot of writers prejudice their material, know the market, or simply prefer to send a story to an editor or a magazine where it will have a better chance. There are diamonds in every slush pile for these reasons.))

'(Fantasy is a different matter, which is why fantasy semi-prozines prosper and multiply. Also, UNEARTH defines "new" and unpublished writers bit too strictly, methinks. The editor told me once that I was disqualified because of some of my sales elsewhere. Me? If the most unimportant and invisible fictioneers in the business are too "professional" for UNEARTH, just what is left for the editors to choose from?)

'My gripe with del Rey is that he is going too sharply in the direction of what he imagines to be the "pulp" end of the spectrum, and away from the "literary." I suspect, in fact, he is heading for the sub-literary, as C.S. Lewis defines the term in EXPERIMENT IN CRITICISM, meaning the readership for whom event (action, plot) are everything, and the actual telling is unimportant. This is what Gernsback was after originally, something closer to journalism than story-telling. There's definitely an element of stylistic tone-deafness in del Rey's editing. Otherwise he would have removed THE SWORD OF SHANARA from his office with tongs, while retching. Really, Dick, you were much too lenient on that particular bit of illiterate garbage. Perhaps it's because you haven't read Tolkien that you can't see the direct copying in Brooks. Had I reviewed the book for you I would have drawn up a "randy readers" guide type chart, telling you how to understand the book without even opening it. A one-to-one matching set of two columns, Tolkien vs. Brooks. Ring equals sword, etc. As for the writing, it's what LOTR would have been like if written by the author of the Tom Swift books. Incredible numbers of said-bookisms, which I was hoping would turn into puns and redeem the book with inadvertent humor.

'Del Rey may have been commercially right in buying the book. Perhaps it will sell to the people who have read Tolkien fourteen times and nothing else in the fantasy field, and maybe it will become a best-seller (and spawn yet another host of low-grade imitations), but I think Bob Whitaker summed it up nicely when he said, "They couldn't get a book as

good as Tolkien, so they settled on one nearly as long." In any case, I simply do not trust del Rey's judgement anymore, either as editor or reviewer. (This effects what I buy, so it is a commercial consideration.)

'A couple of public statements he's made have been telling:

'At the FantasyCon the audience was asking him what he thought of this and that fantasy writer, and would he buy such writers if they submitted today. He said he would buy Dunsany, but first insist Dunsany get rid of the fancy style because "it's not necessary in the telling of a good story." This is why I say del Rey is clearly without an ear for style. A statement like that is like, "Well, Mr. Shakespeare, the plot of HAMLET is really something, but couldn't you drop this poetry stuff?"

'And again, at an autographing party at Hourglass Books (this time I report second-hand---I wasn't there but was told about it) someone asked him why he didn't buy the paperback rights to Disch's GETTING INTO DEATH, and the answer was, "We publish entertainment, not literature."

"This is certainly a very limited view of things. When what he calls "entertainment" (like THE SWORD OF SHANARA) all but makes me ill, and I read the other stuff avidly, we have to reconsider what is entertaining whom. It seems to me that the people who read the more "literary" stuff do so because they are not entertained by what they consider to be simplistic pap. Probably the mistake del Rey and numerous others are making is assuming that the "literary" end of the spectrum is a monolithic thing, a single taste. It does not follow that someone who likes Wilhelm will like Silverberg, or someone who likes Disch will like Aldiss, etc. any more than it follows that someone who likes Leigh Brackett will like Perry Rhodan books. Surely when an editor starts dividing things into "entertainment" and "literature" he is putting a serious straightjacket on the field.'

((You, and others, are losing sight of the fact that Judy-Lynn del Rey is the science fiction editor at Ballantine. Lester, last I heard, was fantasy editor at Random/Ballantine. I'm sure he is an advisor in re sf there, but I'm also sure Judy-Lynn has the final editorial word if necessary. A little less male chauvinism is in order.

((And, though the del Reys are a force in sf, they do not control the field and are not in a position to 'straightjacket' the genre.))

'NEWS: VOID published a fifth

issue, and it has stories by me (the one Harlan Ellison labelled "psychotic" at the 1973 Clarion), Jack Wodhams, Frank Bryning and several people I never heard of. The reprint is "Haunted Ships" by Allan Cunningham, originally published in 1822. Book reviews by Bruce Gillespie and a conreport by the editor. The magazine is beginning to shape up and seems to have made contact with Australian fandom. I'm selling copies again. \$1.45 each. Also still have #4. The \$3/4 deal is off, unless somebody wants duplicates.'

6-6-77 News from Suncon this morning: I am on the Best Fanwriter ballot for the Hugo. I thank all ye who nominated me.

# I have the new Summer-Fall Putnam's catalog, and Phil Farmer's third Riverworld book is scheduled for October publication. Title: THE DARK DESIGN. Cost: \$9.95. The catalog blurb does not say that this is the final volume.

#### # LETTER FROM BUZZ DIXON:

Late May, 1977

'What Darrell Schweitzer manages to avoid saying in his article is that dialect, when overdone, is a literary pain in the ass. It matters not if the dialect is Elizabethan, Southern, or Chicago jive, if it slows down the story it's worthless.

'A more formal manner of speaking seems to be required when writing dialog in a sword & sorcery novel, tho somebody will probably write one which doesn't use the same and will be proclaimed a trail blazer.

'I remember a story I never got around to writing some years ago. It was about a sword and sorcery world coming into contact with 20th century Earth. Its opening scene would have been:

"What ho, varlet," cried the mighty thewed swordsman, the hot rays of the sun glinting off his raven-black hair and bronzed muscles. "Enter ye the domain of Ralnon the Terrible seeking succor or savagery? Answer me well, lest my sword taste warm blood tonight."

"East shit, pigfucker," yelled the black marine, firing from the hip.

....

'Platt on Brunner on drugs: A week ago I was in the dentist's chair waiting to be drilled and filled when the novocain needle he was injecting me with hit a blood vessel. Within a minute my arms and legs felt as if they were made of lead and I

had difficulty moving them (the vessel apparently led away from the brain, thank God!). I told the dentist what was happening and he just about had a shit fit. He and the nurse kept me under close supervision for the rest of the morning until they were certain the drug had passed from my system.

'It makes me wonder just how harmless harmless drugs are.

....

'Dainis Bisenieks' Opar jokes are contagious. A comedy album called OPAR THE DOOR, RICHARD? A sick movie titled OPAR, PO PAR, MAMA'S HUNG YOU IN THE CLOSET AND I'M FEELING SO SORE? A gangster novel about the head of a gang named Richard Milhouse style, written in Mickey Spillane style, would be called OPAR DON, ME?

....

'No doubt you have heard of the new "sci-fi" film, CAPRICORN ONE (or perhaps it should be called CAPRA CORN, ANYONE?) which will be about a fake flight to Mars. It's being done by Sir Lew Grade, the man who gave us (gave, hell, shoved down our throats) ((So who told you to open your mouth?)) SPACE:1999 and THE CASSANDRA CROSSING. NASA of all people is helping, perhaps to head off rumors which will put them in a denying position. The similarity between that and WE NEVER WENT TO THE MOON makes one wonder about a quick rip-off book (much like the novel, ALIEN, which has a blurb equating it to CLOSE ENCOUNTERS OF THE THIRD KIND. But Columbia has delayed CLOSE ENCOUNTERS release until Christmas so the bulk of the book browsers seeing the blurb will wonder what in hell it's talking about).

....

'Remember that Lucas has never claimed STAR WARS will be great science fiction. Indeed, he claims it's a samurai/wizards/comic book/space opera aimed at the 12 to 14 year audience.'

(Mental age 12 to 14 year-olds, I presume. STAR WARS is currently going great guns with the high-school and college-age audience.))

#### # LETTER FROM BRYCE H. MOW:

24 May, 1977

'When I was reading my copy of THE BEST OF CORDWAINER SMITH, published by the SF Book Club, I noticed that the editor knew his German, but not his Chinese. (I work as a Chinese and German linguist for the Federale Gummint.) I was reading the introduction to "The Dead

Lady of Clown Town" (page 117) and noticed that the editor stated, "An-fang" is literally 'beginning' in German..." That's true, but if you see the third paragraph (also on page 117), a Chinese explanation would make much more sense: An-fang

安方

would mean Peace Square

in Chinese; and An-Fang 安方 would mean Beginning Place in Chinese. A much better pun, or include all three. After all, Cordwainer Smith was a native speaker of Chinese.'

#### # LETTER FROM NEAL WILGUS

May 17, 1977

'Since you keep up with the Rockefeller and the Council on Foreign Relations you probably know that a recent issue of Ray Palmer's FORUM was devoted to Gary (NONE DARE CALL IT CONSPIRACY) Allen's update, "The CFR." Like most rightwingers, tho, Allen's focus is rather narrow and I'd recommend Robert Shea and Robert Anton Wilson's ILLUMINATUS! as a better guide to conspiracy.

'I've always thought that it was too bad the Shea/Wilson "Trilogy" didn't find greater acceptance in the SF world. When ILLUMINATUS! first came out I happened to make one of my rare visits to the Albuquerque SF group and was pleased to hear fans like Roy Tackett, Mike Kring and Bob Vardeman proclaiming it the best-read of the year (1975) and I expected it to be a strong Hugo contender. Alas, Shea and Wilson are Outsiders so the book wasn't even considered.

'I was just beginning my own research into the illuminati/CFR scenario when ILLUMINATUS! was published and I was lucky enuf to contact Bob Wilson thru the letter column of GREEN EGG -- which resulted in the SFR interview with him and the OUT-WORLDS one with Shea. Now Wilson has done a zany but flattering introduction to my study of Illuminatory, THE ILLUMINOIDS, which Sun Books will bring out this summer. You'll find the whole Rothschild-Rockefeller-Round Table -- CFR-CIA-Bilderberger-Trilateral Commission story spelled out there -- and Adam Weishaupt too.

'Meanwhile, ILLUMINATUS! rolls on, with or without the blessings of the SF Establishment. It was adapted into a five-part drama by Ken Campbell and Chris Langham and performed last fall by the Liverpool Theatre of Language, Music, Dream and Pun. Bob Wilson, in a recent letter, reports that the plays were also performed by the National Theatre in



London in March and will soon be presented in abridged form (5 hours rather than 10) on the commercial stage at the Roundhouse in London. Shea and Wilson attended both the Liverpool and London performances and Shea writes that "the actors swore they could see our eyes glowing in the dark."

'Tragedy and Hope Department: As you may already know, Wilson's daughter Luna was killed in a clothing store robbery last fall but true to his belief in the future Wilson has had her brain cryonically preserved in the hope of eventual revival, cloning or whatever. Anyone wishing to contribute to the cost of cryonic maintenance can send donations to:

Patricia Luna Wilson Fund  
1090 Miller  
Berkeley, CA 94708

'P.S. Another worthwhile place for contributions for fans with extra money is Dirk Mosig's Lovecraft Marker Project. It will cost roughly \$1300 to put grave markers on the presently unmarked graves of HPL and his mother -- an outrageous cost but over half has already been raised and the markers are projected to be completed by August, HPL's giving only the name, dates and epitaph I AM PROVIDENCE. Contributions should go to:

Dirk W. Mosig  
Dep't. of Psychology  
Georgia Southwestern College  
Americus, GA 31709

#### LETTER FROM MICHAEL KALEN SMITH

27 May 1977

'I'm of two minds about the Schweitzer-Malzbeg thing, also the Malzbeg-Del Rey thing. I don't generally care much for Malzbeg's work, but that's just taste; It would be tad presumptuous to say that he can't write because I don't like his stuff. But Malzbeg is awfully excitable about comparatively minor issues. May-

be he just doesn't know how to rant properly. Ranting is an art, you know. Ellison rants from a traditional soapbox at Hyde Park Corner. Heinlein looks grave and utters pronouncements. You prophesy like Savanarola. But Malzbeg, unfortunately, comes off like the gibbon cage at the San Diego zoo. And Schweitzer isn't much better. Ben Bova's tolerant shrug was quite the best response.

'I read Brunner's account of his problems with Aldomet with some interest, likewise Busby's and Platt's contributions. I've been on Aldomet four times a day for about five years, with only positive results. Two days in the hospital, undergoing unpleasant and unnerving tests, in an attempt to find some physical "cause" for my high blood pressure resulted in a verdict of "unattributable." That means high blood pressure is just part of my genetic makeup, and in an earlier age would have killed me off by now. 'After a few months of Aldomet -- which, as Platt says, is a specific, not a tranq -- I was down off the walls, had stopped grinding my teeth in my sleep, and wasn't yelling at the kids and the cats. My performance at work improved, likewise my relations with other people, and my occasional depression-jags disappeared (though the depression may have come from worrying about my blood pressure...). And what writing I do has increased manifold in quantity and, I think, in quality. Naturally, there are other contributing factors: my doctor successfully nagged me into losing 30 pounds (15 to go) and I try to get more exercise than before. I fully expect, however, to be on Aldomet the rest of my life (thank Arzawa for Blue Cross!) and I don't begrudge it a bit. Oh, yeah, you mentioned dosages: my tablets are 250 mg-1000 mg/day. Is that high? (I have no idea.)'

**PARANOIA IS THE DELUSION THAT SECOND-CLASS MINDS, UNKNOWN, AND DEVIOUS CRIMINAL TYPES COULD BE ELECTED TO BE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES.**



#### LETTER FROM BRIAN EARL BROWN

May 4, 1977

'The trilogy of books by Timlett ending with TWILIGHT OF THE SERPENT struck me as at best so-so entertainment. The first novel is very badly written and filled with a fascination for sex and sadism (but I have less stomach for that than you), the other two books are better, but I thought Timlett never lived up to the expectation that he was going to write some sort of occult history of earth. Instead all his research was used to justify three separate wars.

'Schweitzer's essay on Archaic writing was interesting. I wonder if he's taken it to heart in his own writings (which I haven't encountered?) Advice is easy to give.

'THE SEEKING SWORD is quite good. Put it on the top of your pile. It was one of the few books I've read that held me spellbound from beginning to end, even though it was not terribly well written and blathered more than it needed. Particularly well done was the characterization of the old Shaman. His personality is clearly as narrow as you'd expect from a man of his era.'

#### LETTER FROM DAVE WIXON

18 May, 1977

'A note about Kyle's PICTORIAL HISTORY OF SF -- I'm not sure it's really been remaindered, as Di Constanza said in SFR 21; I think \$7.95 is the honest-to-goodness price: that's what I paid for the thing at MAC (an autographed copy!), and that's the price at Uncle Hugo's here in Mpls -- and I'm sure these aren't reminders. I suspect Di Constanza interpreted this as remaindering because of the unusually low price and the unusual distribution channels. (I've heard rumors -- I emphasize the "rumor" part! -- that both factors result from the use of non-union (Holland) labor on the thing....)'

#### NOTE FROM RICK BEBAN

14 May, 1977

'I have a paperback WORLDS IN COLLISION, pub. Dell (Laurel edition) printed Nov. 1968. It's the 4th Laurel printing, the first being May, 1967. It cost \$54, one dollar less than the "first paperback edition" you claim for Pocket-books. Now that's inflation!'

**DISBAN THE AMERICAN CANCER SOCIETY!  
EVEN CANCER CELLS HAVE A RIGHT TO LIFE!**

## THE FANTASY AWARD COMMITTEE

SUITE 6, 21127 OAK STREET,  
CASTRO VALLEY, CA 94546

THERE ARE NOT MANY AWARDS FOR FANTASY, AS DISTINGUISHED FROM SCIENCE FICTION OR "HORROR" FICTION.

ONE OF THE FEW PRESTIGIOUS AWARDS IS THE H.P. LOVECRAFT MEMORIAL AWARD: IN GENERAL, AWARDS HAVE BEEN MADE IN THE NAME OF AUTHORS WHO WERE UNKNOWN DURING THEIR LIFETIME AND GIVEN TREMENDOUS ADMIRATION THEREAFTER. BUT LOVECRAFT LIVED AND DIED AS AN UNKNOWN, ADMIRER TO THE POINT OF ADULATION BY A FEW FRIENDS WHO WERE LATER TO ACHIEVE FAME -- ROBERT BLOCH AND FRITZ LEIBER WERE EXAMPLES. BUT WHO, AT THE TIME, WERE UNKNOWN AND UNSUNG, FANS AND STRUGGLING YOUNG WRITERS OF A GENRE REGARDED AS NOT QUITE RESPECTABLE IN THE LITERARY FIELD.

NOW THERE WILL BE AN AWARD FOR LIVING FANTASY WRITERS, NAMED AS A MEMORIAL AND TESTIMONY TO A LIVING WRITER:

### THE FRITZ LEIBER FANTASY AWARD

IT WILL BE PRESENTED YEARLY AT THE FANTASY FAIRE -- THE CONVENTION RUN BY THE ONLY MAN TO PUBLISH A BOOK BY THE LATE HOWARD PHILLIPS LOVECRAFT, NOT AFTER HIS DEATH HAD MADE IT FEASIBLE TO ADMIRE HIM WITHOUT PAYING HIM ROYALTIES, BUT ACTUALLY DURING HIS LIFETIME; WILLIAM CRAWFORD, WHOSE "SHADOW OVER INNSMOUTH" ACTUALLY APPEARED IN HARD COVERS IN 1936, THREE YEARS BEFORE HPL'S DEATH, ALBEIT WITHOUT FINANCIAL SUCCESS.



FRITZ LEIBER WILL APPEAR AT THE CONVENTION TO ACCEPT THE AWARD: IT IS OUR HOPE THAT THIS EVENT WILL RECEIVE THE PUBLICITY SUCH A LANDMARK DESERVES AND WILL CONTINUE AS AN AWARD OF PRESTIGE IN THIS FIELD. IT IS ALSO OUR HOPE THAT THIS WILL SPARK A TREND OF GIVING RECOGNITION TO LIVING WRITERS DURING THEIR LIFETIME.

THE FRITZ LEIBER FANTASY AWARD WILL BE PRESENTED AT THE BANQUET OF THE FANTASY FAIRE CONVENTION, WHICH WILL BE HELD AT THE PASADENA HILTON ON AUGUST 12, 13, AND 14, 1977. MANY NOTABLES IN THE FIELD OF FANTASY LITERATURE, INCLUDING ROBERT BLOCH, RAY BRADBURY AND C. L. MOORE, HAVE PROMISED TO BE PRESENT AS THEIR RESPECTED AND MUCH-LOVED COLLEAGUE RECEIVES THE FIRST OF THESE BEAUTIFUL AND UNUSUAL AWARDS

FURTHER INFORMATION CAN BE RECEIVED FROM WILLIAM J. CRAWFORD, IN CARE OF THE FANTASY FAIRE, 1855 WEST MAIN STREET, ALHAMBRA, CA 91801.

MARION ZIMMER BRADLEY  
RANDALL GARRETT

FOR THE COMMITTEE

LETTER FROM JOHN GUDRY  
May 12, 1977

'Re your review, Porges' EDGAR RICE BURROUGHS: Richard Lupoff's opinions are more than questionable, his expertise self-appointed. (By his own admission, he first read ERB in 1963.) His ALGOL review is obviously sour grapes. He fears competition with his own MASTER OF ADVENTURE --- a pitiful compilation of synopses --- and knows his "expertise" can't stand comparison with Porges' scholarship. Porges spent three years in original research among Burroughs' papers.

'Lupoff...has somehow acquired a reputation outside ERB circles that he certainly does not have within them. Beside such long-time experts as Stan Vinson, Vern Coriell, John F. Roy, and others, his pretensions sink to the preposterous.

'Let's look at Lupoff's newest example of his "expertise", BARSOOM: EDGAR RICE BURROUGHS AND THE MARTIAN VISION, in which he begins by assuring us that he will avoid synopses except as necessary to the development of his thesis. What does he give us? Publication dates, a touch of ERB biography, a pinch of Edwin Lester Arnold, and synopses of nine novels and five novelettes---and

precious little else. Just like MASTER OF ADVENTURE.

'On second thought, Lupoff is an expert. An expert at turning plot summaries into books. A master of synopses. But, I fear, of little else, unless it be sour grapes.'

Yep, I get all sides, and try to give them room to breathe. In a very real way I am dependent on the readership for Other Viewpoints, and for looks into corners of this increasing vast and specialized sf and fantasy world.

### # LETTER FROM ROBERT BARGER

May 9, 1977

'I very much enjoyed the latest SFR as usual. I really enjoyed Schweitzer's Prithee Sirrah, etc. essay. By the way, perhaps you could persuade him to do an article on Fan-fish Fandom sometime in the future. I would enjoy such an article anyway. I do know (I think) what the Great Staple War was about, but I must shame-facedly admit that I don't know who saved Courtney's boat, or who Willis was, or who Hoy Ping Pong is. I didn't know Bloch was Ghod, and I must admit to only having a vague idea as to the real reason the "h" is in "bheer". I have also heard that Schweitzer once was, and perhaps still is, a Secret Master of Fandom. Whatever the hell one of them things is.'

### # LETTER FROM R.J. ORTEGA

May 11, 1977

'I've been reading a lot lately about how fusion power is just around the corner, and how this will solve all our energy problems forever, etc etc...it struck me that the fusion problem probably will be solved within the next decade, but some ecology group will quickly point out dangers (real and imagined), and will immediately start lobbying against fusion. As a matter of fact, I'd rather live near a breeder reactor than a fusion plant -- if a breeder plant went, I'd have a little while to get the hell out, but if one of those magnetic vacuum bottles went out.... BOOM! No warning, no nothin'.

'Of course, the big flap will come in fifty years, when we'll have dozens of consumer groups passing out bumper stickers reading "Stop Anti-matter NOW!" and "Who Needs Total Conversion?"

# AND THEN I READ....

## THE OPHIUCHI HOTLINE

By John Varley  
A Dial Press/James Wade Book, \$8.95  
1977.

COMMENT: Varley's first novel, and a good one. Against the backdrop of Earth devastated by the Invaders and human civilization existing only on the Moon and other enclaves on other moons and planets, it is the struggle of a woman biologist, Lilo, who is condemned by her Luna government for experiments in cloning, and who is illegally freed by an amoral politician who is mounting a campaign to reconquer the Earth. Boss Tweed insists she serve his plan and when she continually tries to rebel and escape, she is killed, and replaced with a clone of herself which has been programmed with her memories. But "Lilo" persists, is killed, another clone is brought to life...

It is also the story of The Ophiuchi Hotline, a 400-year-old series of information transmissions from, apparently, a distant star. Humans have used the information to improve their technology and culture. Then the aliens send the bill for their service...

There is more, much more. Complications, sub-plots, alternate clones... The Invaders, who are totally alien and so far superior to man that they consider human intelligence strictly minor, inherently third class, on a galactic scale.

The sex-changing society, the self-surgery techniques...

Varley has packed too much into this novel. Much of the material seems wasted, thrown away. The Lilo "self" went through five or six clones and ends with two Lilo clones together, cooperating, as a satellite spaceship is off on an interstellar search for humanity's next home as the Invaders, irritated by mankind's pesky existence, are about to sweep the solar system clean.

Varley threw in the kitchen sink. He didn't have to.

The book is the first in a series of Quantum Science Fiction releases, a prestige line, with Isaac Asimov and Ben Bova serving as a judging panel.

**POLITICS: INVOLVEMENT, GENERALLY UNWILLING, IN THE LIVES OF STRANGERS.**

---Arthur D. Hlavaty

## ROCANNON'S WORLD

By Ursula K. Le Guin  
Harper & Row, \$6.95. 1977, 136 pages.

COMMENT: There is a new introduction with this reprinting in hardcover of her first sf novel, written in 1964, published by AMAZING (partially) and in 1966 wholly in 1966. Ursula knows the flaws and the faults (which she sees more clearly and feels more deeply) but she finds the novel Good.

I agree. A very good story of a man alone amid humanoid races on a strange planet, fighting an enemy from another star, trying to save the relatively primitive peoples he has grown to admire and love. It's a tough book, written with grace... a kind of prose-poetry in places.

I was surprised at the slipshod printing job my copy showed: uneven printing, a few obvious typos... Not up to Harper & Row standards, I should think.

## MY LORD BARBARIAN

By Andrew J. Offutt  
Ballantine 25713, \$1.50

COMMENT: Lester del Rey gave this a puff review in ANALOG, so I had to see if it was all that good, given Andy's less-than-inspiring fiction in the past.

It is a dense, richly worded, turgid novel that is the essence of TURGIT STORIES. It is the story of Valeron the barbarian who conquered by sword the seventh planet of a seven planet empire, far from Earth, in the far future when these planets have forgotten the Old Earth Empire and have only legends of the Ancients and a few eons-old spaceships that never wear out and which are simple to operate. The emperor calls this new king to him on the empire planet and intends to cement Valeron's allegiance by offering his lovely daughter as bride, and thinks of Valeron as the next emperor.

This does not sit well with the emperor's first minister, who has power lust. Thus the stage is set: when Valeron enters the throne room he finds the emperor dead and is instantly accused of the murder!

He draws his extra-long sword and--



I must admit Andy writes this style very well. It is a shade too melodramatic and overdone for my taste. But it is your quintessential space-opera/barbarian story and should be a success at the box office.

## CIRQUE

By Terry Carr  
Bobbs-Merrill, 1977, \$8.95

COMMENT: Cirque is the queen city on Earth millennia in the future. Humanity has spread through the galaxy, and only occasional visitors, often aliens, come to sightsee. Cirque is built on the edge of a large abyss into which cataracts the river Fundament, and the abyss is the recipient of the city's garbage.

An alien millipede is visiting this day, and his encounter with a citizen is picked up and broadcast by the Monitor, a girl with super telepathic ability who samples the lives and events of the city and broadcasts to every mind exceptional and interesting occurrences.

There is Nikki, a pudgy young woman who has taken a pill to bring out, serially, her four different Selves, and we follow her and find her at the locus of the terrible things which happen...

Because there is life in the depths of the Abyss, and it is ugly, revolting, tentacled, mindless, evil life which is climbing up the walls, attempting to enter the lovely city.

Early on it is obvious that the Abyss and the creatures in it and the city are metaphors, and the climactic scene at the end of the novel where one of the horrible creatures, attracted by the artistic fire of a religious ritual, enters the temple and is attacked with hysterical hatred is more a message about maturity, human perceptions, preconceptions and integration of mind and body and society than a simple as-it-appears riot and aftermath.

CIRQUE is continuously interesting because of fascination with Nikki's personality changes and the sub-plots involving the woman Guardian of the city, the priestess of

the temple, and their men, the intriguing alien who can see his future, and the Beasts from below.

This novel would have been ridiculous written by anyone less skilled than Terry (or less wise), but I still had trouble with the transformation of the Beast in the temple.

I don't have as much faith in the perfectibility of humanity as he does. But read the book, read it, and make up your own mind. It entertains as it goes.

many children in order to insure being taken care of in their old age. Industrialized nations don't need that method of providing social security, says Mr. Asimov.

Oh, yeah? In this wealthy country of ours we DO need a healthy, growing crop of future workers so they can be taxed and taxed and taxed to keep the Social Security Fund from bankruptcy. We have a rising percentage of older people and a shrinking percentage of young workers. If they ever stage a tax revolt....

All you young couples out there, please have kids! I want to be sure there'll be somebody working to support me when I get to be 65.

#### THE GREEN PAGES

Edited by Maggie Oster  
Ballantine 25898, \$7.95

COMMENT: One of the better books on who-what-when-where-why and how to do indoor plants. Step-by-step how-to drawings. Shows you the latest equipment and supplies. Gives sources for everything! Profusely illustrated. There's a chapter on every aspect, and a myriad of tips and information.

In the full-size softcover quality format, 224 pages, with index. 68 chapters. Well worth the money.

#### A GENERATION REMOVED

By Gary K. Wolf  
Doubleday, \$6.95, 1977

COMMENT: The old Rule-By-Kids plot, with age 55 being the euthanasia time, and age twenty being the limit for holding important positions. Improbable, incredible, but Wolf writes well and makes it as believable as it can be made to be. I wish he would stop using plots that are inherently implausible, as in his last novel, KILLERBOWL, and now this.

#### EARTH OUR CROWDED SPACESHIP

By Isaac Asimov  
"awcett 2-3172-0, \$1.75

COMMENT: A brief, primer-like description of the population bomb and the shrinking natural resources bomb, with many photos and charts and maps. It is a "book" I suspect Isaac wrote in three or four days.

He has no solution except a hope for international cooperation and having the rich, industrialized nations give up some of their wealth to the poorer nations, to educate the natives and raise their standard of living so they won't have as

FRANK FRAZETTA---Book Two  
Edited by Betty Ballantine  
Peacock Press/Bantam MI057-3, \$7.95.

COMMENT: Letter-size, slick paper, heavy covers, full color reproductions of dozens of Frazetta's most lusty and exciting work, plus some of the best black and whites. He is a great colorist, and his figures have solidity, mass, detail. They take up space in their worlds. He is also a lover of female flesh, and paints breasts and buttocks with loving care, ah yes.

Most of these plates can be and deserve to be mounted and framed.

#### PAIN GAIN

By John F. Carr  
Major Books 3154, \$1.50

COMMENT: Intriguing title and a good space cover make this a fine sf package.

It's a novel of a post-nuclear war era when the realms of pure mankind have shrunk to enclaves, when they purge themselves of radioactivity-created mutants, and when an unlikely form of mankind has developed and is on the march, whose hordes threaten the remnants of civilization.

It's an interesting novel, well-done, and after a few amateurisms in the prose in the opening chapters settles down to effective storytelling.

This is Carr's second sf novel, I understand. He should soon graduate to the better-paying book publishers.

#### TO CONTROL THE STARS

By Robert Hoskins  
Ballantine 25253, \$1.50

COMMENT: The first few pages of this Juvenile adventure novel of Star Gates, Galactic Federation agents helping the expansion, convinced of mankind's manifest destiny almost stopped me with lines like:

sparks exploded up, to settle back in an orange rain that died slowly as the individual bits of fierceness consumed their allotment of fuel.

I think the underlined words are awkward, and unneeded. Should have been cut or edited out. Then there was:

"It's Assignment Day!"  
He threw that simple statement over his shoulder as he...  
Too literal. I pictured him actually throwing... And not needed.

After those klunkers the prose smoothed out but I was unwilling to stay with Shan Eliot's adventures and hairbreadth escapes.

#### FLOATING WORLDS

By Cecelia Holland  
Pocket Book 80867, \$1.95

COMMENT: This is one hell of a novel which treats of a future anarchistic Earth in realistic terms, of mutant super-men (who are very tall, taloned, and very black), of separate governments on the Moon and Mars... And, above all, it deals with Paula Mendoza, a tough, intelligent, anarchistic survivor who somehow, over a lifetime, manipulates, influences, bends great men and military forces, governments to her vision of a future for mankind. She is a marvelous creation, and the skill involved in the writing of this monumental novel is of an order that makes 99.99% of sf seem moronic.

FLOATING WORLDS is so superior it is breathtaking, and the future depicted is so real (and the people so real) it is difficult to believe someone who is not "known" in the sf world could have written it.

I do have one small complaint: Often Holland doesn't make clear enough who is speaking, and this is constant enough to cause irritation.

The book will disturb a lot of people because of the realistic anarchistic society, the openly expressed prejudice, the sex between Paula and these big black mutants, because these black "niggers" are superior... This future is not a utopia. And this novel is exciting, suspenseful, satisfying.

Of course it will likely not be on the ballot for a Hugo. But it is on my personal list of Best-Ever SF Novels...and in the top five.

ECOLOGICAL: THE AWARENESS THAT NATURE IS SNEAKIER THAN MANY OF US SUSPECT.

---Arthur D. Hlavaty



6-12-77 Before I forget: Hank Stine called from Baton Rouge to let me know that his novel of some years ago, A SEASON OF THE WITCH, has been taken for a movie. The excellent novel, some of you may remember, was a heavy treatment of what a man-in-a woman's-body might experience and think.

# An SFR reader wanted to know the definition of a 'fannish fan'. A fannish fan is a person who is more interested in other fans than he/she is in science fiction. Thus a fannish (or faanish) fanzine is devoted to the doings and writings of fans instead of to sf and sf writers. faanish fandom is relatively small and considers itself an elite.

# The postal service has just sent me a new second class rate schedule. Effective July 6th every rate in second class goes up. So what else is new? Next spring first class rates will go up to 15-16¢ per ounce.

# What is so interesting about the escape of James Earl Ray, the convicted assassin of Martin Luther King, from a top-security prison, is the willingness of black leaders and a spokesman for the House committee investigating the assassination, to see conspiracy in the escape and to predict that Ray might have been set up by the authorities or by the powerful forces behind the assassination, to be killed, now that he is talking to the House committee.

The first reports of his escape told of two diversionary fights among other prisoners to distract the guards while the seven went over the wall. As of now (Sunday afternoon) Ray is still free, and three other escapees have been recaptured. The authorities give the impression that the planning for the escape (the diversions, the pipe ladder) ended with getting over the wall. Like the six who made it over landed in the dirt and said, "Well, uh...what now?" They had to have had a plan and perhaps help in getting away further. At least a cache of food and clothes and equipment if not a waiting car for Ray. And those other prisoners who staged the diversionary fights didn't do that for love; they had to have been paid (well) for that, considering what would happen to them after the escape. Who provided the money?

Will James Earl Ray be taken alive? Will he ever be seen alive again? If he simply disappears.... you can expect the conspiracy theory of history to get a lot more credence in this country.

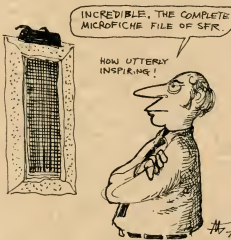
# Greg Martin sent a note of information: "With regards to RUN TO STARLIGHT as the first anthology of science fiction sports, what about ARENA: SPORTS SF, edited by Ed Fernan and Barry Malzberg."

Yes. Thanks for the clarification. ARENA: SPORTS SF was a 1976 Doubleday book, \$5.95.

6-14-77 So they caught James Earl Ray and the other escapees. There was no outside help...or plan to kill Ray. Those men did plan to get over the wall, did arrange diversions... and once over didn't have a clue as to what to do. Duh....

Well, it is a commonly stated assertion that only the dumb criminals get caught, and that the average IQ of prison populations is far lower than that of the outside.

And Ray has to be included among the dumb ones. Which actually re-



inforces the conspiracy theory of the King assassination: how could James Earl Ray, with his apparent moron intelligence, manage to elude that massive FBI and Interpol manhunt for so long, con and cleverly acquire through subterfuge the passports in Canada, live in England, fly to Belgium...etc. (and only get caught by a fluke) without outside help?

# HOW I AM SPENDING MY SUMMER VACATION: I am demolishing the rotten hot-house/shed in back of the garage. Large amount of firewood there, and have decided to create from the salvageable planks and glass a few large coldframes and minigreenhouses.

That leaves a lot of broken glass to dispose of, and (from previous jobs) a couple cubic feet of rocks and broken cement/concrete. Rather than load up the car and pay

a couple bucks at the city dump, I'll dig a deep hole and bury the stuff.

I bought a small dwarf peach tree yesterday, at a nursery, and it has a dozen peaches already on it, which, upon ripening, will defray some of the initial cost.

# Has anyone else noticed how the Supreme Court has declared it is constitutional for teenagers to buy contraceptives...and in another ruling declared that states can pass laws against obscene "speech" without having to be detailed and specific as to what kinds of behavior is to be illegal. The 'shopping list' approach is not necessary.

# The Gay Rights activists must be thanking God for Anita Bryant. She has associated Christianity with antisexual fanaticism, has given religion a taint of zealotry, and caused gays to come out of the closet in great numbers, given Gay Rights more publicity that they could buy in a thousand years, and advanced the Gay Rights cause tremendously. Yea, verily, that Florida anti-homosexual campaign was a victory of such character that if Anita wins a few more like it she'll lose the war...if indeed she hasn't already lost it.

6-23-77 We are definitely in another sf and fantasy boom, and it will get boomer in the next year. The fuel is the success of STAR WARS and the increasing percentages of the population who have read and do read sf and fantasy. First it was/is STAR TREK, now STAR WARS. The steady accretion of sf readers via pocket books.

All this is creating---has created---at least one generation of young people who are familiar with all the sf and fantasy themes, all the gimmicks and gadgets, all the conventions of sf and fantasy story-telling. As this generation reaches its forties it'll become a big TV watcher and you can expect a number of hardcore sf and fantasy shows on the tube, and, in the following years, always a respectable number of sf in the top twenty.

When will the STAR TREK generation start to harden its arteries and become middle-aged? Ten years? Maybe sooner than that a few prime-time sf series will hit and stick.

# I want you (and my carping conscience) to know I tried. I have five full pages of The Archives pasted up---and stacks of books to type up and I have yet to touch the magazines. At the same time in the back of

my head there's a numbers game going on---page totals---and an editor who keeps screaming that "Nobody wants the Archives, Geis! Put another interview in that space! Use your infallible editorial yardstick: would I want this in the zine if I were a paying reader?"

Grin visaged, I Made My Decision. Into the wastebasket went those five pages of Archives.

**"POLITICS, ACTING, EDITING, ADVERTISING, PUBLISHING, PRODUCING, IT'S ALL GIVING THE PUBLIC WHAT IT WANTS."**

# I must mention, in line of service to those who are intrigued by Marion Zimmer Bradley's "An Evolution of Consciousness" and who want to read more of her work, especially the Darkover series: Ace is reprinting the earlier novels of late. Four new releases of these are: THE PLANET SAVERS, THE WORLD WRECKERS, THE SWORD OF ALDONES, and THE WINDS OF DARKOVER.



# I now have that old hothouse torn down, the debris buried, the cobblestone-lined gardens filled with sifted dirt, the sprinkling hoses in place...even a stretch of carrots seeded. The new peach tree is in the ground. I am nearly content. The major work for the summer is completed. Now I can relax a bit and let my sore left arm get back to normal. (The elbow is into a stress situation due to the digging



and other work imposed on it by my left-handedness.) I is indeed getting old, though; this wouldn't have happened a few years ago.

Time to go upstairs and out to pick the lettuce for the salad tonight, pluck an onion or two, and curse the tomatoes for being so slow. Another month.

## LETTER FROM LUTHER V. GIDDINGS

June 7, 1977

'Being a biologist who is occasionally plagued by a nasty demon something like a social conscience, as well as one hopelessly addicted to SF, I am usually pleased at the opportunity to exercise my interests in one endeavor that combines the three fields. Such was not entirely the case however, as I came across something in the May issue of SFR in the form of one of your passing comments. You said, (p. 78) and I quote, "From what I read, scientists accept evolution on faith, as a logical and rational explanation for discovered facts, but they have not come up with living or fossil proof of 'in-between' animals or fish or insects." Aside from wondering what on the subject you might have read, being a specialist with one advanced degree in evolutionary genetics and hot on the trail of another, I couldn't let that go by unblinded.

'Aside from numerous problems of a metaphysical and epistemological nature that you sidestep with your loose treatments of "faith" and "proof" there are several other minor flaws in the quoted lines. Hopefully this may stir you (and any other of your readers similarly deluded) into a broader investigation, that your pronouncements may then come from a background less tainted by the mass of creationist propaganda circulating presently.

'The major problem is that of the challenged existence of "intermediate forms". Briefly, the difficulty is in reality not one of the paucity of their existence, but rather of their superabundance and the difficulties of classifying them in a Platonic, typological scheme designed by one who only too late realized its inadequacy -- the Baron Carolus Von Linnaeus. Indeed, the recalcitrance of the problem becomes most apparent not in trying to find something that is unequivocally an intermediate form, but rather in the attempt to find something that clearly is not. This is the reason that the fossil record in Human Evolution is presently so confusing. Especially with the numerous discoveries made by Richard Leakey in the past ten years, we now have so many different forms, intergrading in all possible ways, that they just no longer fit into the old, comfortable pigeonholes. And this is over a very broad time span and multiple geological horizons and facies, all of which combine to shatter the claim that this could possibly be within-population variation. But the refutation of your pro-creationist assertion is much more profound than merely that.

'Most commonly, the argument of that assertion takes the pattern that a given species is distinct from all its relatives -- that there are discontinuities in definitive characters between them. In any of the numerous retreats from this position that creationists have had to make though, they now substitute "kind" for species (the reverse of what they did in the 1800s) and try to assign "kind" to a taxonomic level that wanders between kingdom and genus, depending on the utility in the particular application. Unfortunately for this argument there are intermediate forms that can be identified at all levels to which retreat is attempted. This has been admirably catalogued in an article by Roger J. Cuffey in the "Journal of the American Scientific Affiliation", Volume 24, Number 4, pp. 161ff (December, 1972). In this article Cuffey gives a list of references on intermediate forms that takes up a total of approximately 78 (!) column inches in small print (damn near takes my dissecting microscope for me to read it!). That's a hell of a long list for something that isn't supposed to exist. By way of clarification, I will try to give a few examples of what is meant by the term "intermediate form" as used by evolutionarily biologists and evaded and obfuscated by creationists.

'One common example is that of Seymouria -- a Permian...well, I can't really say either reptile or amphibian, because, like I said...it is midway between the two groups on the basis of the critical osteological criteria (such parameters as skin color and the like not usually being clarified by examination of fossil remains) -- number of bones and their positions in the skull and lower jaw, the type of teeth, the nature of the articulation surfaces in the pectoral and pelvic girdles especially. All such particulars rather esoteric to the layman, and eagerly disregarded by the creationists when he notices "Aha! He said Permian! Reptiles were supposed to have evolved earlier than that!" True. No help though, for though the beast in question is indeed anachronistic for the role assigned, there are a whole slew of similar ones -- referred to as Seymouriamorphs -- which antedate it in the fossil record considerably and fall at precisely the proper time. Seymouria is used by those innocently unknowing because it happens to be the best known (it was one of the earliest reported) and best described of that group. But not the only one, and not so restricted in time as creationists would have us accept.

'Another embarrassingly rich group of intermediate forms is found

in the Therapsids -- primitive proto-mammals. First found in the early Mesozoic, they are intermediate between reptiles and mammals in all pertinent osteological criteria -- morphology and position of occipital condyles, teeth morphology, number and position of bones in the skull, lower jaw and auditory apparatus, development of the zygomatic arch and so on. Again, all very esoteric. But perhaps I can help to visualize things a bit more clearly in this case. Look at a wolf sometime. Note how the legs are designed to function in a pretty much straight forward and backwards motion while running. Then take a gander at a lizard. While the wolf legs go essentially straight down (viewed from the front) the lizard legs go out sideways first, and then down, as if in the state of perpetual push-up. This is a consistent and diagnostic difference between the two groups and is reflected in numerous and massive modifications to both pectoral and pelvic girdles and mirrored in all sorts of ancillary, epistatic interactions as well, like metabolic rates -- lizards use a lot more energy in locomotion (relative to body mass) than do wolves. Hence, what we call warm and cold bloodedness as enzymatic modifications. But where are the intermediate forms, you may ask? Not only is there a living example in the person of the duck billed platypus (take one apart sometime) but there is a fossil beast known as *Listrosaurus* that was found first in Antarctica. (Later, it was also found in Tierra del Fuego and South Africa as well, providing evidence for Continental Drift...) I have seen and handled life-size cases of the thing given by the discoverer to a professor of mine, and neither I nor any of the experts in vertebrate paleontology know just exactly where in the hell it fits. The pectoral girdle (shoulder bones) is clearly reptilian, with the archetypal side-and-down configuration, while the pelvic girdle is equally mammalian. The same melange of both types persists in the skull/jaw/inner ear bones, teeth arrangements and morphologies etc... Truly an awkward amount of intermediacy in something that is not supposed to have any. And rather hard on creationist theses, except that most who adhere to them are insufficiently initiated into the mysteries of vertebrate classifications to recognize it.

'A further case is found with *Archaeopteryx* -- as close to half bird and half reptile as you can get. The experts are still arguing over where it belongs. Wings with barbarously crude feathers (yes, some fossil imprints have been preserved, though one sample in which they were not was for years mistakenly stuck

with the reptiles until someone looked more closely and wound up sticking it in an in-between box) but no keeled sternum; no pygostyle tail, but avian limbs, etc... etc... Again, distressingly intermediate characters to find where they aren't supposed to be. Must I continue?

'Now those remarks should inter any illusions that you might have regarding the existence of intermediate forms -- as I have reiterated throughout, there are an embarrassment of them by any criteria you wish to choose. The only addition that it might be helpful to make at this point is to cite some background sources that may be useful. Aside from Keeton's BIOLOGICAL SCIENCE, probably the best general introduction currently on the market, there is also THE VERTEBRATE STORY by Alfred Sherwood Romer. I might also add that the reason for the emphasis on vertebrates is that, for obvious reasons, they are the best representatives present in the fossil record (it's difficult to fossilize a jellyfish...) though not the exclusive ones by any means. Most invertebrate intermediates can easily be perceived in the variety of living forms. And if you don't believe it, then take some courses in Invertebrate Zoology and see. Further helpful treatments of this and related subjects can be found in the works of noted evolutionists like George Gaylord Simpson, Ernst Mayr, Ledyard Stebbins and many others.

'Having dealt with the blather on intermediate forms, I might as well take a potshot at the metaphysical and epistemological stuff as well, as briefly as possible.

'Yes, it is, in one sense, admissible to impute to scientists operation on "faith", but this "faith" is drastically different than that recognized in the Christian usage. There is none of the Pauline or Kierkegaardian involvement with absurdity or divine authority. The "faith" of science is, ultimately, in its adherence to the authority of experience, of empiricism. And in that regard, in current Occidental usage, it is absolutely inane to claim that scientists "accept evolution (or anything) on faith as a logical and rational explanation for discovered facts." That statement contains terms that are mutually exclusive and is thus its own negation. Thus, the accusations of para-religiosity and dogma that are implicit, if not explicit, in your remarks clearly miss the boat. If an attack on science is desired it would be better to borrow from E.A. Burtt rather than Kierkegaard or the Pontiff. But therein lies another argument entirely, and I refuse to pick up that gauntlet. At least, in this letter.'

My 'source' was a Jehovah's Witnesses' booklet/tract which made essentially the arguments I spoke of, and quoted biologists (supposedly well-known) to the effect that indeed there are huge gaps in the record and that evolution isn't really provable... only assumed and taken on faith.

The intermediate forms I had in mind were those that showed a steady progression from early to present-day. Some SFR readers have pointed to the early and later fossil record of the horse. I didn't mean intermediate forms between mammals, fish, and birds. I find it fascinating that such creatures exist.

A creationist argument is that there are no current examples of in-transition animals, birds, fish, within their groups. But if you say evolution is proved, then all creatures are in-transition, inevitably. Are there currently alive and comparable distinctly different (say, rats) in clearly progressive stages of change?

I think creationists would say that even what you would class as intermediate are simply separate species created by God six thousand years ago, and where is the proof that there is change now? In other words, since science came of age with accurate measurements and records, is there clear change? (Here the creationists will say that any current change is simply adaptation within a given species, and not actually evolution.) Where are the half-chimps and half-baboons? Where are the half-Mustangs and half-Pintos? Well? Answer me that! You mean to tell me the Ford LTD evolved from a Lincoln? Explain the Thunderbird!

I may, next issue, have a creationist loc-available.

MONOLOG CONTINUES ON PAGE 60



# PROZINE NOTES

## FANTASY AND SCIENCE FICTION May, 1977, \$1.

"The Big Fans" by Keith Roberts was supposed to be the standout of this issue, I suppose, given his reputation and past history of excellent writing, but I thought this novelette about a near-future England and ancient force grids hard to believe, almost a misuse of his material.

The rest of the stories were minor, mostly clever variations and irony.

The most interesting item in the issue is Barry Malzberg's estimations and judgements in his book review column. Leave me quote a bit:

'The doubts have to do with science fiction itself. I wonder if it is possible for the genre ever to produce a true masterpiece.'

'It is therefore a work which, like even the very best of science fiction must to a certain extent be spurious ... atop the act of the imagination which is the novelistic art, it then imposes a second level of unreality, the projected world. I reluctantly submit two tentative conclusions: to the exact degree that SHADRACH IN THE FURNACE is a work of science fiction (and it is very much a work of sf) it is lessened as a novel; and, secondly, and even more pessimistically, it is probably as good as a science fiction novel can ever be and still clearly be science fiction... and, judging it at the highest literary standards, it may not be quite enough. SHADRACH has much to tell us, but it still has far less than BULLETT PARK or REVOLUTIONARY ROAD or FRANNY AND ZOOEY or THE INVISIBLE MAN. Or, for that matter, THE DEER PARK. Its conclusions, its vision could only be absolute if this were 2012 and the world ruled by the great Khan, and it is not, it is not, and I venture to say that it never will be.'

Barry is saying that a great novel must be set in the contemporary world, and it must be a novel that is of character, of seeing human beings clear.

And science fiction, to the degree that it spends time on Wonder, and slights Character, is inherently inferior. To BE sf the genre MUST BE second rank Literature.

I tend to agree. And I think what bothered me about GATEWAY is that Pohl was trying to meld a novel of Character (primary concern with inner people) with science fiction

COULD YOU PUT  
US IN TOUCH WITH  
H.P. LOVECRAFT, MR.  
HEMINGWAY?



(primary concern with Wonder).

If a story is centrally about people it cannot stand as true sf, because necessarily the Wonder is reduced in role to set decoration. And if a story is centrally about Wonder, the people are secondary, tools, used for the purpose of enhancing the effectiveness of the Wonder. As Literature---crapola.

I don't think there's any getting away from this reality, and we should resign ourselves to it.

Wow! We don't have to try to produce Literature anymore; we can write exciting, extanting, gripping SF!! with real people and can make telling points and insert messages, but the pressure is off, we are free, free, freeeeee.....

GALAXY, April, 1977, \$1., Edited by James Baen.

COMMENT: The cover, purplish, and too similar in color, overall, to the December and next-published March issues, is by Greg Bear and illustrates his novella, SUN-PLANET. I thought SUN-PLANET too wordy, cliched and static in its opening pages and refused to go on.

The two best stories were the novelettes "Passport for a Phoenix" by Steven Utley---fine, gripping, but somehow without a satisfying ending; and "Night Runners" by Jan Haffley, a first-published writer, whose story of a runaway girl, a clone of her mother, spun its wheels for a long time but finally got going only

to crash into the pit of a mother-love happy ending. Even so, even so, she has the touch.

GALAXY, May, 1977.

Comment: Frank Herbert's first installment of THE DOSADI EXPERIMENT is a grabber: the rivalry between extremely intelligent minds, a danger planet, a promise of violence and death... Herbert writes convincingly of people with extremely acute intelligence, and of their contempt for stupidity.

The Bonnie Dalzell cover is an abortion, and it would be interesting to know why Jim was forced to use it.

I was impressed by Dennis Schmidt's "The Way of the Sword" which seems to be a kind of Zen sf, written with an ease and control which engages interest and keeps it.

An ARGOSY Special--SCIENCE FICTION \$1.00. Edited by Lou Sahadi.

Comment: I noticed this one-shot on the stands and bought a copy out of curiosity and for collecting. It is a ripoff. The stories are not identified as coming from the pulp era, from the back files of whatever sf mags Popular Publications put out in the old days. There are stories here by Leigh Brackett ("Child of the Green Light"), Chad Oliver ("The Land of Lost Content"), John Jakes ("Half Past Fear"), Alfred Coppel [spelled Coppel on the contents page] (Star Tamer), Walter Kubiulus ("Eternal Earthling"), etc. etc. The illustrations are from the pulp mags and are nostalgia provoking--Finlay, Bok, Calle, Paul...

ROBOT [Published in Italy] Edited by Vittorio Curtini. 800 lira.

Comment: I have been receiving these monthly issues for a while...and while I cannot read Italian I can and do appreciate good editing and good production values. This magazine is not just fiction reprinted from America: Sturgeon, Gunn, etc., but has some original fiction by American and Italian writers. There is a large and varied review section with cover illos, interviews, news, editorial opinion. Even, in this Feb. '77 issue, a sexy comix strip of sf mein.

The cover format is similar to the original GALAXY layout.

Write: 20162 Milano,  
V.le Ca Granda, 2  
ITALY

VORTEX #1-2-3-4, 45p. Edited by Keith Seddon. Monthly.



Comment: This magazine, slick-paper, heavy cover stock, LOVELY covers by Eddie Jones and Rodney Mathews, is dominated by Michael Moorcock and his sophisticated, enui-producing serialized THE END OF ALL SONGS.

This magazine is the latest surfacing of the NEW WORLDS type of sf in England, and is a flop, I understand, since there are reports that Peter Weston may soon be taking over as editor.

Copies of VORTEX are available from Fantast(Medway) Ltd.  
39 West Street,  
Wisbech, Cambs., PE13 2LX  
UNITED KINGDOM

I think \$1.25 will cover the cost per copy.

Darrell Schweitzer sent along the latest VOID. It is #5, but not so numbered on the magazine or inside, for tactical reasons having to do with the Australian post office, I think.

Editor Paul Collins makes a mistake in choosing to accent certain words in the fiction by using bold face type. In the first place good fiction doesn't need that kind of typographic tricks to help out, and the practice is redolent of amateurism and insecure/fanatic writers who want to punch up their messages. Religious writers do it a lot.

I read the Wodhams story and kind of liked it, though Jack has a habit of using malaprop words and phrases now and then that clank and clunk in the reader's mind as he passes.

The Schweitzer story, "Lady of the Fountain", shows his mastery of the seeming-archaic style, but seems rather slight and anecdotal withal.

Darrell is the American distributor of VOID, and he writes that issues #4 and #5 are available at \$1.45 each. From: Darrell Schweitzer  
113 Deepdale Rd.  
Strafford, PA 19087

A remarkable performance by Steve Fabian: he has covers on the current AMAZING (July), the current FANTASTIC (June), and the current GALAXY (June).

I can't say very much for the July AMAZING. The short novel, NOBODY HOME by F.M. Busby, suffers from his as yet uncured dialogar-rhea, and his apparent belief that detail is Good. There is an awful lot of busy work in his fiction of late and not enough conflict and

tension.

"The Long Fall" by A. Bertram Chandler struck me as dull in spite of the action. Lots of movement but not very much emotion in sf lately.

I did like "Odds," by Christopher Anvil, which is about some intense, unusual insect pests... It held my interest and paid off at the end. The best of the lot this issue.

I don't understand how FANTASTIC keeps going. With a paid circulation of around 20,000 copies it must, along with AMAZING, be walking along the ragged edge of their distributor's willingness to handle them.

That explains Ted White's editorial asking readers to ask retail outlets to stock the magazine(s).

Probably a fruitless appeal, as he knows.

It has always seemed to me that both magazines have failed to find an identity...a clearly recognized

## FNORD ALERT

### COSMIC TRIGGER: FINAL SECRET OF THE ILLUMINATI

by Robert Anton Wilson, from And/Or Press in August. All you ever wanted to know about the Illuminati, the Discordians, Tim Leary, UFOs, cattle mutilators and why Jimmy Carter is never seen in public without his trousers on.

type of story...that readers want and will take trouble to buy.

AMAZING publishes run-of-the-mill sf composed of hand-me-downs and beginners' work. There is no such thing as an AMAZING story as there is an ANALOG story.

FANTASTIC is subtitled 'Sword & Sorcery and Fantasy Stories', but the sfs is usually badly done and weak, bloodless, emotionless stuff. Gutless.

Too much of current sf and fantasy is as pale and gripping as a dead man's hand. I'll make the point again that most of our writers seem ashamed of emotion, of passionate motivation, of rage and fear...genuine emotions in their characters. The writers are cool, man, cool...or they're old pros who write the words but feel r.p. pain.

I like the occasional mockery and satire and tongue-in-cheek sf and fantasy...but in moderation and in sharp contrast to realistic, vivid, riveting involvement with real fictional people. There is precious little contrast nowadays.

End of gripe.

"MY SECRET IS AN ERASE BUTTON. I ERASE EVERYONE WHO IS UNKIND TO ME. IT BORES ME TO REMEMBER THOSE PEOPLE. MY FRIENDS MAKE FUN OF MY EUPHORIC DISPOSITION. YES, I AM SUPERFICIAL--AND PROUD OF IT. IT TAKES A LONG TIME TO GET THERE."

---Jean-Pierre Aumont

"Aumont's Design for Living," L.A. TIMES, 6/28/77

Thanks to George Warren

"A MAN MAY BE PERFECTLY HONEST IN A CONTENTION, AND HE MAY BE ASTUTE AND PERSUASIVE IN MAINTAINING IT, BUT THE MOMENT THE SLIGHTEST COMPULSION TO MAINTAIN IT IS LAID ON HIM, THE MOMENT THE SLIGHTEST EXTERNAL REWARD GOES WITH HIS PARTISANSHIP OR THE SLIGHTEST PENALTY WITH ITS ABANDONMENT, THEN THERE APPEARS A DEFECT IN HIS RATIOCINATION THAT IS MORE DEEP-SEATED THAN ANY ERROR IN FACT AND MORE DESTRUCTIVE THAN ANY CONSCIOUS AND DELIBERATE BIAS. HE MAY SEEK THE TRUTH AND THE TRUTH ONLY, AND BRING UP HIS HIGHEST TALENTS AND DILIGENCE TO THE BUSINESS, BUT ALWAYS THERE IS A SPECTER BEHIND HIS CHAIR, A WARNING IN HIS EAR. ALWAYS IT IS SAFER AND MORE HYGIENIC FOR HIM TO THINK ONE WAY THAN TO THINK ANOTHER WAY, AND IN THAT BALD FACT THERE IS EXCUSE ENOUGH TO HOLD HIS WHOLE CHAIN OF SYLLOGISMS IN SUSPICION. HE MAY BE EARNEST, HE MAY BE HONEST, BUT HE IS NOT FREE, AND IF HE IS NOT FREE, HE IS NOT ANYTHING."

---H.L. MENCKEN,

PREJUDICES: A SELECTION  
Vintage V58, \$1.65

SAVE THE WHALES: HARPOON A HONDA

---Robert Anton Wilson

OPIMUM DERIVATIVES HAVE BECOME  
THE RELIGION OF THE MASSES

BRAINWASHING: CONDENSED SCHOOLING.

---Arthur D. Hlavaty

'MORE RECENTLY STILL, EPIDEMIOLOGICAL SURVEYS SUPERVISED BY THE HARVARD SCHOOL OF PUBLIC HEALTH HAVE SHOWN THAT AN EARLY PREGNANCY CONFERS A CERTAIN DEGREE OF PROTECTION AGAINST BREAST TUMORS WHICH LASTS THROUGHOUT LIFE. THIS WORK WILL ONE DAY MAKE YOUNG WOMEN RECONSIDER THE WISDOM OF USING THE PILL TO POSTPONE UNTIL LATER ON THE BIRTH OF ANY CHILD THEY INTEND TO HAVE.'

---P.B. Medawar,

THE NEW YORK REVIEW OF  
Books, June 9, 1977.

# SMALL PRESS NOTES

The Spring/Summer catalogue of The Science Fiction Shop in New York (56 Eighth Av., NY, NY10014) has some interesting listings. Books are categorized, and two of the most interesting groups are 'Erotic' and 'Gay'. Tanith Lee's DON'T BITE THE SUN and DRINKING SAPHIRE WINE are listed as Erotic (did I miss something?), and while there is a disclaimer:

'None of these are actually gay novels, although each touches on the theme.'

the Gay group includes THE HERITAGE OF HASTUR, WALK TO THE END OF THE WORLD, DHALGREN, TRITON, GETTING INTO DEATH (stories), 334, THE MAN WHO FOLDED HIMSELF, MOONSTAR ODYSSEY, TIME ENOUGH FOR LOVE, THE LEFT HAND OF DARKNESS, SOLUTION 3, WELL OF THE UNICORN, and CHAOS DIED and HOW THE MIGHTY ARE FALLEN.

Some of the authors of the above books are now very surprised.

# Doug Fratz has published THRUST #8 (Spring 1977) and has taken yet another step into the semi-pro world. It is a Special Ted White issue, featuring the column Ted originally wrote for ALGOL (and which caused Andy Porter to reject it and kick Ted out of the magazine to boot), and a too-short interview with Ted. At least it seemed too short to me; Ted can be fascinating and startlingly candid.

The Ted White column was about art directors in science fiction, and the problems inherent. Very good, full of inside information and examples. He does name a few names, but... Well, I suppose Andy was uncomfortable with Ted in ALGOL and...and now ALGOL is a nice, safe, inoffensive, bland 'Magazine About Science Fiction' for the relatively mass market that Andy is seeking.

If you'd like a copy of this issue of THRUST, send \$1.25 to Doug Fratz, 2008 Erie St., #2, Adelphi, MD 20783.

Speaking of ALGOL, let me review the new issue.

The Spring, 1977 issue has a lovely spacestation cover by D. A. Dickinson. The interior is splendidly laid out, thoroughly professional in every way. Contents by Bester, Pohl, van Vogt, Lupoff, Williamson, and Lafferty. All informative, entertaining...

And Andy Porter, editor-publisher, says in his editorial he is now taking ANGOL out of fandom and into prodrom! Blare of trumpets.

At \$1.95 the magazine gives a wide audience a look at the insides of science fiction. 72 pages, 22 of



which are advertising. Nevermind, the ads pay the printing bill.

There are two small niggles that nigger in my mind, though: The cover has a subtitle--'The Magazine About Science Fiction', and the subscription page layout blares--'Subscribe To THE HUGO AWARD WINNER.'

All this gives the impression that ALGOL is THE ONLY magazine about science fiction, and THE ONLY Hugo Winner...or at least the latest Hugo award winner.

Hell, ALGOL tied with SFR for Best Fanzine a few years ago. Andy has won ONE Hugo Award. I have won SEVEN, and The Browns, with LOCUS, have won FOUR.

Andy, of course, will continue this deceptive hype. It pays off, I suppose, among the ignorant.

(Please, don't remind me of those ANALOG ads I ran with the line at the bottom about how SFR was edited by 'seven-time Hugo-winner, Richard E. Geis.')

# In SFR #21 I mentioned having been interviewed over the phone, long distance from Manhattan, Kansas. I couldn't remember the names of the two fans who questioned me.

Now I know who they are, and the name of the fanzine. The interview has been published---in Q, CYE! (that is short for QUICK, CLOSE YOUR EYES!)

The fans are Randi Bird and Kim Smith, a couple of pseudonyms if I ever saw one. That night they wanted to interview Harlan Ellison and he wasn't home, so they called me (probably because they didn't have the phone number of anyone else half-

way important.)

Anyway, in #2 of their magazine there are twelve pages of single-spaced interview. And I cringe a bit at the dumb answers I gave to some of the questions. Clearly I am not good at extemporaneous speaking. All my intelligence is in my fingers at a typer.

Anyway, there has been a third recent interview, for NEW LIBERTARIAN NOTES, and I hope that will be enough for a few years. I have begun to feel like all those sf writers who are interviewed to death every time they go to a convention, and sometimes at home, too.

Randi and Kim want contributions to their zine, want to trade... No price is listed. BUT they might accept \$1. If you want to read a copy of #2. Their address is:

Q,CYE!  
P.O. Box 296  
Manhattan, KS 66502

# JEET #1, subtitled 'fine fan fictopict', is a home for amateur sf and sf artwork. Offset, booklet format, quarterly, \$1.25, for:

Ken Hahn  
R.D. 5,  
Auburn, NY 13021

# XENOPHILE #30  
Edited and published by Nils Hardin, P.O. Box 9660. St. Louis, MO 63122.

COMMENT: Advertising and journal devoted to fantastic and imaginative literature...old and new, especially the old pulps.

With this issue XENOPHILE incorporates Camille E. Cazedessus, Jr.'s THE FANTASY COLLECTOR. Which about makes XENOPHILE the old-mag advertiser/collector magazine extant, I imagine.

This is the third anniversary issue and is \$2. Normal costs are \$12. for a yearly sub, with first class mail service. Other options are available. Write for details.

# SCIENCE FICTION STUDIES, March, 1977, has its usual run of academic sf studies: "The Surreal Translations of Samuel R. Delany," "Discontent in American Science Fiction," etc. Le Guin is analyzed again. There is a study of Phil Farmer: "The Faces of a Thousand Heroes."

And there is a discussion by Ursula Le Guin and Prof. Darko Suvin on the Lem Affair in SFWA. Seems the officers of SFWA gave Stanislaw Lem (the "heavy" Polish sf writer) an honorary membership in SFWA. Whereupon a well-known SFWA member objected strongly because Lem was busily engaged in ripping off American sf writers by soliciting stories and

novels for Polish reprint, and not paying or acknowledging... Things like that. And since Lem has a long-standing snarling opinion of American sf and its writers, this SFWA member thought it idiotic to give Lem an honorary membership. Whereupon an officer discovered a technicality and took away the membership.

Le Guin and Suvin think this action was a low blow, undignified, and an insult to a great writer.

Ursula makes the argument as follows: 'My own experience, in a small, informal, personal survey of acquaintance-members the last few months is that most of them feel that the matter is trivial, since Lem is a) rude, b) a foreigner, c) a commie, d) not such a good writer anyhow, e) male. Therefore no injustice or dishonor done him really matters.'

I think giving Lem the honorary membership was stupid in the first place; he didn't want it, has never acknowledged it, and probably thinks SFWA foolish for giving it. How has he been done dirt or dishonored? The SFWA has become a pretentious joke in science fiction of late, anyway.

SCIENCE FICTION STUDIES is published three times a year, costs \$6. per year surface mail, and \$7. overseas (or \$10. airmail). All remittances must be in U.S. funds. Send to SFS Subscriptions, English Dept., Indiana State University, Terra Haute, IN 47809.

# Many of you remember ETERNITY, the good-quality semi-pro sf magazine published by Stephen Gregg a few years ago. It went into limbo. Then it was supposedly taken over by New Hope Publishing Company and would appear as a paperback...

Now I have received a booklet magazine titled THE SPECULATIVE POETRY REVIEW #1, and it is a filling-of-subscription vehicle for ETERNITY. Stephen Gregg, in an editorial in SPR#1 says he is working at two jobs, has no time for ETERNITY, and is in debt. SPR is published by Bob... Bob... I cannot find the publisher's last name anywhere. All the text is hand-printed, badly, densely, and poems by some well-known sf/fantasy writers are not well presented.

SPR is 40 pages, costs \$1.50, and is available from 30 Pleasant Street, Nantucket Island, MA 02554.

Ha, I just checked my subscription lists for MA, and Bob is Robert Frazier, of that address.



# Richard Labonte is a columnist for an Ottawa, Canada, newspaper, THE CITIZEN. He has recently done a column on sf fanzines turned pro and semi-pro: SFR, ALGOL, and LOCUS, and he would like review copies of other small press pubs, for review. As of the end of May his address will be: Richard Labonte

Tatty Hill,  
RR#2,  
Calabogie, Ontario, Canada.

# Almost all the stories in the Summer, 1977 issue of UNEARTH are flawed one way or another, but they are interesting despite that, and are also usually short. There is one story, "Locksmith and Master of Love" by Toby Perkins, which is a grabber and a holder all the way to its failed ending, which I will remember.

Harlan Ellison's column on writing, about the art of titling stories, is a must-read. He gives a list of titles and asks which you would read first:

1. THE BOX
2. HEAT LIGHTNING
3. PAY AS YOU GO
4. HEAR THE WHISPER OF THE WORLD
5. THE JOURNEY
6. DEAD BY MORNING
7. EVERY DAY IS DOOMSDAY
8. DOING IT

He likes #4, 8, and 6 in that order. I prefer #6, 7, and 3 in that order. Harlan's favorite, #4, strikes me as sounding literary pretentious. And #8 sounds to me too earnestly with-it.

Ah, well... Unless you're in a position to demand your titles be used, the editors to whom you sell will change your titles to suit their ideas of good titling.

# There are three new fantasy books available from Fax: the most important is WEIRD TALES---The Weird Tales Story, written and edited by Robert Weinberg.

This hardcover 8-1/2 x 11 volume is the publishing history of WEIRD, with chapters dealing with its major authors, its editor, Farnsworth Wright, and contains photos of all the covers as well as a fine selection of its interior art. There are sections on the interior makeup of the m 3, samples of teasers, and a long chapter of letters-to-the-editor through the years.

A must-have for the collector. It has a beautiful d-j cover by Alex Nino, Frank Magsino, and Orvy Jundis.

The book costs \$17.50 and is available from Fax, Box E, West Linn, OR 97068.

The second book is Robert E. Howard's SON OF THE WHITE WOLF, the second volume of the adventures of Francis Xavier Gordon--El Borak. The stories are "Blood of the Gods," "Country of the Knife" and "Son of the White Wolf." The jacket art, the full-color plates inside, and the many, many b/w illustrations are by Marcus Boas.

It costs \$12.95. Hardcover, clothbound.

The third book is A GAZETTEER OF THE HYBORIAN WORLD OF CONAN, And An Ethnogeographical Dictionary of Principal Peoples of the Era. It is compiled by Lee N. Falconer. Softcover, perfect bound, \$5.95. What I found of great interest was the appendix of source maps of the Hyborian world which were drawn by Robert E. Howard, John D. Clark and P. Schuyler Miller, and Tim Conrad. The Conrad is the most elaborate and detailed.

Of strong complementary interest is THE HYBORIAN WORLD OF CONAN, a full-color, 30"x42" chart of the known world of the Hyborian Age. There is also an inset map of the world of King Kull. This is an impressive work, thoroughly professional in every respect. \$7.95 plus 75¢ for mailing tube and handling. From Fax, address above.

# W. Paul Ganley, an old-time, continuing fantasy enthusiast and publisher, has brought out WEIRD-BOOK #11. It is an offsetprinted magazine, SFR-sized, heavy white bookpaper, 64 pages, \$3.

It is fiction and poetry by such as Brian Lumley, Darrell Schweitzer, Basil Wells, H. Warner Munn, Robert E. Howard, and Joseph Payne Brennan. Artwork by Krenkel, Fabian, Perny, etc. Write to: P.O. Box 35, Amherst Branch, Buffalo, NY 14226.

# Remember THE MAGAZINE...I mean THE LITERARY MAGAZINE OF FANTASY AND TERROR, later shortened to FANTASY & TERROR? Yes? It has been in a long hiatus, but now...now...it has changed to a kind of 'Feminist & Humanitarian Fantasy & Science Fiction' magazine published by continuing editor/publisher Jessica Amanda Salmonson, and it obviously now reflects her primary interest. I have received WINDHAVEN #1 and 2, and as usual, the best parts are the Salmonson editorials telling of where she's been, where she's at and where she wants to go. To say the least she lives an emotionally exhausting life.

Give WINDHAVEN a try; the alternate lifestyle viewpoint is fascinating--and instructive. Send \$1.50 to Atlanta Press, Box 5688, University Station, Seattle, WA 98105.

6-24-77 The May LOCUS (#201) arrived this morning (late, but Dena was in the hospital for surgery, and Charley went to New York...a lot of time was lost...).

Imagine my surprise and delight at seeing that not only am I on the Best Fan Writer Hugo ballot, but also that SFR is on the Best Fanzine ballot. I had heard that SFR had been declared disqualified.

It'll be interesting to see if LOCUS can win three times in a row.

But let me list the nominees as reported in LOCUS:

BEST NOVEL: CHILDREN OF DUNE by Frank Herbert;  
MAN PLUS by Frederik Pohl;  
MINDBRIDGE by Joe Haldeman;  
SHADRACH IN THE FURNACE by Robert Silverberg;  
WHERE LATE THE SWEET BIRDS SANG by Kate Wilhelm.

Comment: Wow. This is one year when I feel that any one of these is a fine nominee and all are of Hugo quality. My choice would be SHADRACH IN THE FURNACE.

BEST NOVELLA: "By Any Other Name" by Spider Robinson;  
"Houston, Houston, Do You Read?" by James Tiptree, Jr.;  
"Piper at the Gates of Dawn" by Richard Cowper;  
"The Samurai and the Willows" by Michael Bishop.

Comment: I suspect the Bishop novella will win because of the fine writing and aura of literature imbued by its downer ending.

BEST NOVELETTE: "The Bicentennial Man" by Isaac Asimov;  
"The Diary of the Rose" by Ursula K. LeGuin;  
"Gotta Sing, Gotta Dance" by John Varley;  
"The Phantom of Kansas" by John Varley.

Comment: Hard to pick; all are fine stories, so there's no problem of Hugo-worthiness. Surprised Varley didn't withdraw one of his nominations to concentrate his voters. But maybe it isn't allowed.

BEST SHORT STORY: "A Crowd of Shadows" by Charles L. Grant;  
"Custom Fitting" by James White;  
"I See You" by Damon Knight;  
"Tricentennial" by Joe Haldeman.

Comment: I've got to go with "A Crowd of Shadows" as a most impressive story.

BEST DRAMATIC PRESENTATION: CARRIE; FUTUREWORLD;  
LOGAN'S RUN;  
THE MAN WHO FELL TO EARTH.

Comment: I think CARRIE is the best, on the grounds of suspense, impact, and integrity. Better acted, too.

BEST PROFESSIONAL EDITOR: James Baen;  
Ben Bova; Terry Carr;  
Ed Ferman;  
Ted White.

Comment: An impossible choice, like apples and oranges and pears and apricots and.... Which style of sf/fantasy do you like best? I expect Ben Bova to win again.

BEST PROFESSIONAL ARTIST: George Barr;  
Vincent DiFate;  
Stephen Fabian;  
Rick Sternbach.

Comment: Amazing that Kelly Freas isn't on the ballot again. All these artists are fine, though I admit to a sentimental preference for Steve Fabian, a man who came up through fandom (and who still does a lot of work for fans) to where he is dominant in GALAXY and AMAZING and FANTASTIC.

BEST FANZINE: LOCUS;  
MYTHOLOGIES;  
OUTWORLDS;  
SCIENCE FICTION REVIEW;  
THE SPANISH INQUISITION.

Comment: As usual the real race is between LOCUS and SFR, with OUTWORLDS a perennial third. PSYCHOTIC/SFR won in 1968-69, and THE ALIEN CRITIC/SFR won in 1973-74. LOCUS has also won the Best Fanzine Hugo twice, two times in a row, the most recent 1975-6. As mentioned earlier, will LOCUS be the first fanzine to ever win the award three times running? The voters seem to be unwilling to let that happen.

BEST FAN WRITER: Don D'Amassa;  
Dick Geis;  
Mike Glicksohn;  
Donald C. Thompson;  
Susan Wood.

Comment: I won this award last year, and perhaps the voters will feel it's time for a change. I might add that Alter-Ego is pissed at not being on the ballot.

BEST FAN ARTIST: Grant Canfield;  
Phil Foglio;  
Tim Kirk;  
Bill Rotsler;  
Jim Schull.

Comment: I don't think Tim Kirk deserves another Hugo on the basis of fan work in 1976. I would like to see Grant Canfield rewarded for the great work he has done in years past and in 1976.

GANDALF AWARD: Poul Anderson;  
Andre Norton;  
C.S. Lewis;  
Fritz Leiber;  
Ursula LeGuin.

Comment: I can't remember what Gandalf represents. A fantasy award?  
JOHN W. CAMPBELL AWARD: Jack Chalker;  
C.J. Cherryh;  
M.A. Foster;  
Carter Scholz.

Comment: Best new author in the Campbell tradition? I refuse to comment.

# LOCUS #201 also reported the 1977 Nebula Award winners. They are as follows:

BEST NOVEL: MAN PLUS by Frederik Pohl.

2nd: WHERE LATE THE SWEET BIRDS SANG by Kate Wilhelm.

3rd: SHADRACH IN THE FURNACE by Robert Silverberg.

BEST NOVELLA: HOUSTON, HOUSTON, DO YOU READ? by James Tiptree, Jr.  
2nd: "The Samurai and the Willows" by Michael Bishop.

3rd: "Piper at the Gates of Dawn" by Richard Cowper.

BEST NOVELETTE: THE BICENTENNIAL MAN by Isaac Asimov.

2nd: "In the Bowl" by John Varley.  
3rd: "Custer's Last Jump" by Steve Utley & Howard Waldrop.

BEST SHORT STORY: A CROWD OF SHADOWS by Charles L. Grant.

2nd: "Tricentennial" by Joe Haldeman.  
3rd: Stone Circle" by Lisa Tuttle.

BEST DRAMATIC PRESENTATION: No Award.

GRAND MASTER AWARD: Clifford D. Simak.

# Another set of awards were awarded recently. A May 18 release from the Instructors of Science Fiction in Higher Education gave the winners of their 1976 JUPITER AWARDS:

BEST NOVEL: WHERE LATE THE SWEET BIRDS SANG by Kate Wilhelm.

BEST NOVELLA: HOUSTON, HOUSTON, DO YOU READ? by James Tiptree, Jr.

BEST NOVELETTE: THE DIARY OF THE ROSE by Ursula K. LeGuin.

BEST SHORT STORY: I SEE YOU by Damon Knight.

# Death has struck the ranks of sf and fantasy writers again: H.H. HOLLIS (real name Ben C. Ramey) about 60 years, on May 14, 1977.

And HENRY HASSE, May 20, 1977.

# Not death, but a mild heart attack, struck Isaac Asimov in May, and he is /was in hospital, recovering. He plans a lighter work load.

The above two items courtesy LOCUS. Subs to LOCUS in USA are



'ALL SIGNS INDICATE THAT OUR CIVILIZATION IS JUST ENTERING THAT FINAL STAGE IN WHICH INSPIRATION AND ITS ACCOMPANIMENT OF CREATIVITY ARE LOST, IN WHICH MEN BECOME EXCLUSIVELY CONCERNED WITH ADMINISTRATION OF WEALTH AND POWER FOR THEIR OWN SAKE.'

—LOUIS J. HALLEY  
OUT OF CHAOS

Thanks to John Kelly

6-25-77 An arm of the federal police fell on a United Airlines passenger service agent last night. Two Drug Enforcement Administration officials wanted the United employee to hold the flight while one of them made a phone call. The employee held the flight for two minutes, then let it take off, not convinced the agents had a strong enough reason to delay the flight (and inconvenience the hundred or so passengers).

This so pissed off the agents that they rousted the man, frisked him, roughly handcuffed him, shoved him against the wall, and arrested him for interfering with law enforcement officers performing their duties. They detained him for one and a half hours. The local U.S. Attorney talked with the agents by phone after United complained, and the passenger service agent was released.

The DEA officers must have read the papers the day before in which it was reported that a high federal court reversed a lower court and prevented local authorities from prosecuting a DEA agent for murder after the agent had shot an unarmed, fleeing, innocent farmer in the back during a drug raid.

These arrogant, callous gun-happy bastards can now get away with anything----and know it.

What price the need to "fight" un-American drugs, huh? Alcohol, caffeine, and nicotine...and trunks...are approved. Heroin, cocaine, hash,

LSD and others are not approved, and the end justifies the means in combating these substances.

Trouble is, the pleasures of telling other people what they can and cannot do with themselves is often expensive in lives and money and freedoms. Well...never mind about freedom. We'll just have to do a better job of teaching our youth the American Way of self-destruction.

# I think it was yesterday that a government survey of gas producers and supplies showed that there would be extensive cut-backs and interruptions due to shortages and lack of incentive to look for more natural gas, this coming winter.

Hell, I knew that. Carter wants to control the economy with taxes and price fixes...wants to (for instance) tax gasoline at the pump and then give tax rebates to the consumers. Of course, only in the beginning does he want to give the rebates, else he wouldn't put on the tax. This rebate plan is the sweet sugar to make the tax palatable. Once the tax is on the books....

The Energy Plan is the thin entering wedge of state controls on the key elements of the economy. I suspect that across the board wage-price and profit controls is too much for people to swallow, just now. So the energy controls will have to do. Of course the controls will continue to warp the supply/price situation and will result in greater and greater dislocations and fuck-ups. This is what is desired! These men are not stupid! There is a method in this apparent, obvious madness. They will blame the private sector for the shortages and layoffs this winter, and agitate for ever more controls to force the owners of the gas to bend to their will. This will turn off other businessmen and inhibit investment which will create more tight supplies and more shortages and create more price increases as people bid on the short-supply materials, and "inflation" will go up more and

the statists will call for more controls to force equal access and fairness, and... The same old story.

Watch it happen.

# The wonderful postal service has announced that the book rate will go up to 30¢ for the first lb., 11¢ for the 2nd to seventh pound additional, and be 8¢ for each additional pound. Pity the poor clerks. I understand 2nd class transient and third class rates are due to go up, too, effective July 6th.

Nobody knows yet what the foreign rates for books and magazines will be.

6-27-77 Gil Geier and Bill Breiding stopped by yesterday on their way to the Westerner in Vancouver, B.C. Nice People. I showed them the offices, the gardens...the piles of back issues. Gil had an interesting suggestion as to what I could do with the extra print run of SFR 18... [Wot, burn copies of SFR?]

# I am tending to slack off on my sf magazine reading. And I would like to adopt Ted White's suggestion that I acquire a prozine reviewer. Easier said than done.

He/she has to be a steady reader of the zines, has to have background and perspective, and above all has to be able to write well, because reviewing sf mags is a DRAG to do and to read and the writer must have that elusive, peculiar talent to make story comments interesting by combining synopsis with observation and wit.

So said, if YOU think you can fill the bill, send a sample review along and we shall see, we shall see.

# By the way, the "ad" on page 57 for Bob Wilson's COSMIC TRIGGER is not an ad in the sense that I accepted. I gave it.

From time to time I will give ads to people or companies for good and sufficient reasons. But I will not accept paid advertising. Consider these items as plugs.

I must preserve my amateur standing, after all.

Why is Linda Bushyager turning purple? [Inside joke to those who do not read her KARASS. She has a very readable KARASS. Though how she gets it through the mimeo is beyond me....]

# It is my intuitive judgement that the bull market in the NY stock market ended last Tuesday. On that day, I think, the transportation average joined the industrial average in a downturn which will penetrate 896 on the industrial Dow and that this winter will be sad, very sad...



# THE ALTER-EGO VIEWPOINT

"Alright, Geis, it's time. Get your mind off the gardens and onto science fiction, where it belongs."

Alter, get lost. I've got to water the crops, saw the wood, build a woodshed, construct a coldframe or two, think about a small greenhouse and...and some painting, some wiring, some plumbing... I tell you, this do-it-yourself thing is time-consuming and a challenge.

"It is also fraught with danger. Do you remember the dire threat I made last issue? Three pages are due me, Geis, or it's surgery time with a rusty blade. You'll be known as falsetto Richard, or no-nuts Dick in certain quarters. Do you want that to happen?"

Well, I knew you were kidding. I knew... I realized.... Why are you opening that old pocket knife? Why are you coming closer? W-why are you--- STOP! I recognize talent and ambition and determination when I see it. And of course you can have your promised/extorted three pages. As much space as you w-want. Heh-heh-heh.

"Thank you, Geis. I knew you'd honor your promise. Now let me get to the evicestation of a few pretentious books. What is this top one on the pile? Ah, yes, DIONYSUS: THE ULTIMATE EXPERIMENT by William S. Ruben.

"This is about the idea of the government conducting a sex-in-space experiment, and it is so absurdly out-of-true with reality, so full of idiot dialogue and incredible sex attitudes, that even the information that this novel was first published (in a shortened version) in 1970 does not save it or exonerate it or the author. The plot is tricked up with a lot of red herring Questions to justify this "experiment." But most of all I object to the stilted, awkward, malaprop prose. William S. Ruben (or Fred Shannon, who owns the copyright) is a writer who has no talent and who has persevered to the point of a shallow mechanical competency."

You forgot to mention that this novel was formerly titled WEIGHLESS IN GAZA.

"Yeah...and for that title someone should be beheaded...in Gaza."

And you forgot to mention that DIONYSUS was published by Manor Books at \$1.50.

"No I didn't forget. I knew you'd do the scutwork."

May I choose your next victim, Alter? It gives me a strange thrill.

"I always knew you were a perpetrator, Geis. Sure, go ahead. Choose."

How about these two? They should be gutted together, since they're by the same author.

"Ah, yes. A LITTLE KNOWLEDGE and STOLEN FACES by Michael Bishop. Now, A LITTLE KNOWLEDGE is admittedly interesting on an intellectual level, and does carry the reader along, as the reader follows young Julian Cawthorn as he is forced to work for a living and cons himself into a writing job which in turn involves him with the alien visitors---the Cygnusians---and the social-political-moral-religious absurdities of the domed city of Atlanta after the breakup of the United States.

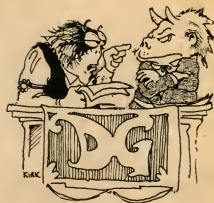
"But, dig, Geis, Jim and all the other characters are mere tools in Michael Bishop's sweaty Message-laden hands, and the message is that either that religion is Serious Business and there is by God a God, or it is that Religion is a con game used by the top religionists and politicians and etc. for power, status, and to keep the masses in their place, distracted and entertained."

So what else is new, eh, Alter?

"Yah, while reading this I was sometimes sure it was a put-on, and then sure---during those long, apparently serious discussions of Religious Questions---that Bishop was writing with a straight face. Trouble is, the Discussions are so serious by the characters that they are satire...or seem to be. I have much respect for Michael Bishop's smarts, so I think this is a two-level satire. I will leave it to the readers of the book who have read this review to decide what it is. It is not beyond Bishop to have written this as a triple-level put-on."

So the Aware reader is never quite sure how to finally judge the book. That's----

"That's sadism, Geis. That's elitism, and smart-ass arrogance and smirky superiority. But of course Bishop isn't interested in being clear and straight with mere readers. He's aiming at the Literary Establishment and the English Professors who dote on this kind of stuff; they recognize his aim and will likely take him unto their bosom and reward him well. Stroke for stroke."



You are harsh, Alter.

"I resent being used, Geis. I don't know if I'm being laughed at, conned, or given some straight religio/socio/philosophical fat to chew on. The result of this uncertainty is a virulent hatred for the man who has done this to my mind. I don't deserve this kind of ambiguity and bafflements. Hell with it!"

As Alter sits fuming, I should here note that A LITTLE KNOWLEDGE was published by Berkley/Putnam and costs, in hardback, \$8.95.

You want me to introduce Bishop's other novel, Alter?

"Yes, do it."

It is STOLEN FACES, and it was published by Harper & Row, and costs \$7.95 hardcover. It is about a group of leper-like humans isolated by their society, and it is about a conscientious new Director of the compound who is too honest and who becomes too involved in the puzzle of the disease. The action takes place on the planet Tetzcatl but this is really---

"Hold it, Geis! No opinions from you! You've got your own review column. But you were going to make a valid point. Bishop has written what appears to be science-fiction, but upon close examination the sf is mere furniture; the story is socio/cultural/psyche fiction in clever sf disguise, and treats of the tragedy of role-playing, social imprinting, revenge, masochism, guilt, expiation of same, and all that deep psychology stuff. It reeks of do-gooder message, and if the reader wants to he can look for less extreme equivalents to the Mumporphy disease in the here and now."

Alter, for all your carping at Bishop and your hatred of his fiction, tell me again why you make it a point of reading so much of his stuff?

"He writes good. It's a pleasure to read his scenes and his dialogue and characterization, but these God the ends...the uses he puts these

tools to."

Great carpenter, but you don't like the things he builds, huh?

"I especially don't like the way he kills off his most sympathetic characters. Herocide is not a good way to please readers."

That Art, Alter.

That's Art, Alter. That's Tragedy. That's Literature.

"That's crap, Geis. Please introduce the next book."

It is FOR FEAR OF LITTLE MEN by James A. Fitzgerald, M.D. A novel from Exposition Press at \$10.00.

"Exposition Press is a vanity press, let it be known; Doctor Fitzgerald paid to have his novel published. With very few exceptions vanity press novels are self-published because the editors of the paying publishers know shit when they see it. This book is of that type of literary shit known as show-off. The good M.D. cannot pass up a single chance to use a technical term where a simpler, common one would do. He has a vocabulary, damn it, and insisted on showing it off. Also, alas, he is prone to use style blind phrasing. His characters talk in lectures, in professorse. Even his action sequences are as if written by a computer connected to a dictionary."

Do you want me to add that this novel is set in the 40th century A.D. and is about immortality and the social structure brought about by an immortal elite?

"If you wish. What's next?"

Well...do you want to address yourself to THE ANARCHISTIC COLOSSUS by A.E. van Vogt? (Ace, \$1.75)

"Why not? Is he above destruction? Is this novel A.E. has built a society...anarchistic in name... which is made to work by a system of feedback to a computer which can alter human behavior when the wrong emotion is generated, and the wrong antisocial action is initiated."

Van Vogt admits that human nature is not going to change and that the only way a viable anarchistic society can work is with the help of an all-knowing God/Parent monitoring every citizen.

"Yeah, and the story is about the exceptions, the evaders, and the aliens who are on the verge of attack to wipe out mankind. How can mankind survive with a hap-hazard volunteer space fleet and a key-man out of the way in the low-class work colony of Antarctica?"

It's an interesting, suspenseful novel, Alter. Why do you put it

down?

"Oh...because van Vogt is into using super-intelligent manipulator heroes who anticipate and plan-for everything, and he doesn't quite bring off the impression (to me) that the character really is all that smart. And, too, some of the dialog struck me as malaprop and a bit juvenile in spots."

But---

"Yeah, yeah....it isn't all that bad a book, but I get the impression that A.E. is not writing well-rounded novels lately; he's writing a series of contracted-for books and these books are in essence van Vogtian pot-boilers, good-but-not-his-best, exercises in exploring an idea at a time. In short, he's coasting."

He's earned the right to coast. You expect too much too often.

"True. You may continue this dialog with the next book."

There is no next book, Alter, unless you want to get into favorable reviewing for a change. There's THE DOSADI EXPERIMENT by Frank Herbert, and FLOATING WORLDS by Cecelia Holland.

"No, no, you take care of them in your review section. I'll... I'll comment on that copy of HUSTLER you bought a few days ago."

I was saving that for my diary!

"I'm liberating it! You can comment on the James Earl Ray escape."

Oh, all right! What was it about HUSTLER that you want to talk about?

"I just wanted to express my bemused admiration of Larry Flynt, the publisher of HUSTLER, who has given a certain audience the raunch it wants and will pay for. Sex raunch. Bad taste raised (or lowered) to just one notch from upchuck country. Only SCREW is more extreme, and repulsive."

As you say, Alter, he is filling a need. And is perhaps doing more

to break down prudery than ten years of PLAYBOY.

"The thing is, Geis, he's an out-and-out hustler; the mag is perfectly named. The house ads for Hustler products are many and varied. And he sells the mag on one basic appeal: naked, shell pink, flower-like labia. Pussy galore. He must think, and he may be right, that millions of men will pay and pay and pay to see detailed, well-lit color photos of the entrances of lovely girls' vaginas. It's amazing."

What about the raunchy cartoons?

"He's gone one step beyond PENTHOUSE, I suppose. PENTHOUSE, a few years ago, was THE raunch mag, one step beyond PLAYBOY. Nowadays PLAYBOY is totally respectable, PENTHOUSE is marginal, and HUSTLER is the unspeakable zine. I shudder to speculate on the next unspeakable publishing success. Perhaps it will be a zine devoted to the glorification of penises."

That would make a certain amount of sense, Alter, since at a certain age boys like to see other boys' equipment, and to compare.

"Of course. We've had the breast zines, and when they became tame and the breast had lost its allure and mystery, the muff-zines took over (and the breast zines adapted to show the heretofore verboten territory.) Now we've got the open-pussy zines, and the dong-zines are sure to come."

Was...that a pun?

"Yeah.... And after that, the borders will be extended to sex acts and ejaculations. Little by little, porno is going mass-market and mass consumption."

Where will it all end, Alter?

"It will end on TV, Geis, with THE ORGY HOUR, HANK'S HARLOTS, THE WHIP FAMILY, THE CORPSE LOVERS, etc. and there will be nothing left.... except a switch to real live sadomaso and death-on-camera."

That's just if-this-goes-on

H AS IN HORRID  
U AS IN USELESS  
M AS IN MERETRIOUS  
B AS IN BLATHER  
U AS IN UNFORTUNATE  
G AS IN GROSS  
COMPREHEND?



extrapolation. Things'll never go that far!

"There probably will be a swing back to more censorship and under-the-counter porno, but the cultural swing won't be too far, and then the pendulum will sweep into new areas. That's been the pattern, and I expect it'll continue. I see a growing resemblance to the old Roman bread and circuses manner of governing the dependent masses."

Let's not get into economics and politics again. You were supposed to be talking about HUSTLER.

"And so I did, Geis. What more do you want?"

I want you to tell me you're finished so I can paste up this column and put it in its place in this issue.

"I don't think I've used up my three pages."

\*Sigh\*

"Oh, all right, print a letter or two in the rest of my space!"

Thank you, Alter. Any last words?

"Yes. How come, in GALAXY, you still get credit on the cover, on the spine, and in the column heading?"

I'm not sure. Perhaps Jim can't quite bring himself to put 'Alter-Ego' on the cover and spine. And he's likely not bothered to ask Tim Kirk to make a new, up-to-date drawing for the column, giving you full credit: 'By Alter-Ego, with Richard E. Geis.' You did get full credit on the contents page.

"True... Okay, wrap it up. My final line is: PARANOIA IS THE ART OF THE IRRESPONSIBLE."

\*\*\*\*\*  
LETTER FROM MIKE GLICKSOHN

May 7, 1977

'SFR 21 is an exceptionally meaty and interesting issue: you're most definitely to be congratulated for the obvious time, effort and care that has gone into its construction. No matter what I might have said or might say about you as a writer, I certainly wouldn't want you to get the impression that I've anything other than respect for what you've done with the magazine and for science fiction and fandom through its publication. I may not respond frequently to it, but I always read and enjoy SFR, and have done ever since you resurrected it as PSYCHOTIC... what? Ten years ago? I've got a complete set of your publications

since that green-twiltone mimeo re-appearance so you know I'm not just a casual observer.

'How long will I last, Dick? Until I die, my hermit friend, until I die. Of course, that could be four weeks, but it's been eleven years so far and while I may not publish as many fanzines as you do, I write more words each year than you do for the fan press (and that says a lot, because there's a hell of a lot of Geisian words in four issues of SFR: you'll note that nothing is being said about quality, merely quantity) and have done for the last few years. In fact, I write more words for fanzines than most fans, and plan on continuing that career for as long as I can. (As a matter of interest, I've written much more in the first four months of 1977 in the way of non-letter material than I've done in any previous four-month period of fanning. Eighteen articles, which may be peanuts for Don D'Amassa but represents about a four-fold increase in productivity for me. I may have a decade and a half to go to catch up with you, Dick, but I'll probably do it: of course, you won't be around when I finally pass you, but I promise I'll make a small toast to your memory when it happens... and explain to the fans around me who this "Dick Geis" is I'm paying tribute to!)

'You have a point when you note the amount of time and work that Geis, Porter and the Browns have put into developing their magazines, but I think you're dismissing Glyer's remarks a little too flippily. (Flippy?) He has a very valid point. Dick Geis doesn't work any longer, because SFR is his job. Andy Porter was on unemployment for months and now works exclusively, I believe, on ALGOL and related publications. Charlie Brown lost his job some time ago and I have not heard that he's found another one yet. So the "Big Three" of fanzine publishing are all working full-time on their magazines! Fascinating! What you seem to be saying, Dick, is that in order to earn a fanzine Hugo, a fan has to be willing to make his fanzine his only job! Maybe that's what it's come down to, but how many people want to abandon their other jobs in order to be a full-time fanzine publisher? And should that much of a sacrifice be required of them? I say "NO!" but then I happen to enjoy my work as a teacher and wouldn't want to give it up, and I certainly wouldn't give it up just to be a fane, because being a fane isn't that important to me. (Which is obvious from my recent publication record!) Okay, I'm happy with that situation and can accept that I'll never win another Hugo; but there are a lot of people out

there who do publish damn good fanzines while also working, and I think it's totally wrong that they'll never get the recognition they deserve just because their fanatic is a hobby not a vocation. The fanzine Hugo is supposed to be an award for amateurs, people who don't make a living from their sf work: if the only way to win one is to give up your job and devote your full time to publishing, then I think there is something definitely rotten in the state of fandom.

'Interesting interview with the typically laconic Tim Kirk. I wish he'd said why he didn't feel that disqualifying himself for further Hugos wouldn't help the situation, especially after admitting that he didn't even deserve the nomination let alone the award. I've known Tim for years and consider him a good friend and certainly one of the very best fantasy artists ever to grace the field (two of his beautiful works are within two feet of me as I type this) but I think it's wrong for him not to take his name off the ballot now. Some years ago, when he was still producing a sizeable amount of work, I disagreed vehemently with those who said he ought to withdraw just because he'd already won. But when Tim himself realizes that his current output doesn't justify his appearing on the ballot then I simply don't see what reason he could possibly have for not taking his name off it. Sure there are other problems with the Hugos, but Tim could solve one of them if he chose to.

'Well, I guess that's it. Oh, in case Harlan doesn't write to you, I saw him in late April and he'd just sold the series of A BOY AND HIS DOG to NBC but he hadn't handed in "The Last DV" yet. So don't count your matched sets before they're boxed!"

Mike, I really don't want to argue anymore about amateurism and professionalism in fanzines anymore. If a worldcon ever decides to add a semi-prozine category to the Hugo awards, fine. Whatever.

I have heard that Harlan has bought at least one more story (as of late May) for LAST DANGEROUS VISIONS... The mss for that monster must now total more than three feet.

---

#### DEFINITIONS

PARANOIA: THE DELUSION THAT YOUR ENEMIES ARE ORGANIZED.

WELFARE CASEWORKER: A WELL-PAID WELFARE RECIPIENT.

Arthur D. Hlavaty  
THE DIAGONAL RELATIONSHIP

---



A LIBERAL BUILDS A SAND CASTLE, ATTACKS THE TIDE WITH A FLAMETHROWER, AND CALLS FOR LEGISLATION TO STOP THE MOON.

LETTER FROM GLEN M. BEVER,  
LIBERTARIAN

May 28, 1977

'I've been reading SFR for a couple of years now, and enjoying it immensely. But I think your comment on page 2 of SFR #21 suffers from some (shudder! gasp!) dubious logic, and misrepresents the libertarian position.

'You wrote: "Old John (Rockefeller) bought local governments, even state governments, to get his way. In an era of minimal state and federal regulation, these private power structures naturally, inevitably, strove for monopoly". Then: "...I have yet to read of any plan to control private power and maintain competition. Seems to me you'd end up (if government were somehow banished) with super giant private enterprise becoming government in practice if not in name."

'Notice how that word "government" keeps cropping up? The cardinal principle of libertarians of all stripes is "Thou shalt not initiate force against another!" Even in the late 1800s, the major agency for taking individuals' money and property by force was the group of people calling themselves "the government". (The 16th Amendment, FICA, OSHA, FDA, ICC, FTA, NLRB, and the rest of the alphabet soup have helped the process along.) John Rockefeller and J.P. Morgan used legislatures and bureaucrats as tools for "political" (i.e. by force) intervention in the workings of the market because they recognized this as the only practical route to economic hegemony.

'What I'm saying is that a "monopoly" (literally "one seller") of the kind you fear cannot exist in a free market economy unless you have

government intervention to establish something like the U.S. Postal Service. Let's suppose two things: 1) there is no government around to "protect the consumer" and "maintain competition"; and 2) John D. Rockefeller VIII wants to establish a monopoly on the sale of widgets. With no government around to tax, regulate, harass, and otherwise eliminate competing companies, John has to resort to what is usually called "cut-throat competition": sustained selling of his widgets at very low prices, taking a loss, until he drives everyone else out of business.

'Now what are the possible outcomes? 1) Acme Widget has more resources than John does, and John goes broke. No monopoly. 2) John "ruins" everyone else that produces widgets, achieves a "monopoly", decreases production, and raises prices sky-high. Assuming that demand is relatively inelastic (so that entrepreneurs buy up the physical plants of the bankrupt widget manufacturers, Acme and the rest, and start producing them more cheaply than John's "monopoly price"). So he has to lower his price again and indulge in another round of cut-throat competition" -- even John D. Rockefeller VIII doesn't have enough money to keep doing this indefinitely, but he can't keep new, small firms out of the marketplace by the mere threat of "ruin". They will just take John's exorbitant widget prices as a sign of an inefficient older company ripe for displacement from its share (100%) of the market.

'This argument is extracted from pp. 602-3 of the Nash Publishing (Los Angeles) edition of Murray Rothbard's MAN, ECONOMY AND STATE -- Chapter 10 (in Vol. 2), "Monopoly and Competition", elaborates on it considerably. I recommend the book highly as an exposition of non-statist economics.

'It's interesting that Poul Anderson's latest novel contains a similar approach to the relationship between the free market and the State. If you've read it, you'll recall that some of the companies of the

Polesotechnic League wanted to grab a "monopoly" on the planet Mirkheim. Did the Seven in Space try to compete for it on the free market? Of course not. They tried to snatch Hermes, impose a new "government", and then "legitimately" use force to keep everybody else away from the prize. Meanwhile the Home Companies, who controlled the "government" of the Earth-based Commonwealth, tried to do the same thing. Old Nick van Rijn has some great speeches in the book!

'In short, if you can find a single honest-to-god monopoly born of, and sustained by, a true FREE-MARKET ECONOMY (and that means no federal charters, no government "regulations" no anti-trust laws, no tariffs, no quotas, no punitive or preferential taxes, no government contracts, no thing) -- then, sir, I will take your argument more seriously.'

Of course John D. Rockefeller VIII, with some of the outrageous profits on his monopoly of widgets, will employ a secret force of assassins, bombers, thugs, etc. to make sure no competition arises to Challenge his monopoly. And who will stop him? Will the would-be/might-be competitors band together and hire a protective force of "soldiers" to oppose the Rockefeller people? Really?

I wouldn't oppose that force. I'd take my money and seek out a more sure, safe way to make money. I'd probably invest in Rockefeller Enterprises.

Eventually, Rockefeller would set up phoney fronts, stage cultural shows, hire media, submerge into other names and try to make people think the Rockefellers are in decline. The illusion of a free market would remain, the illusion of democracy would remain, but the real power would always remain with the Rockefellers through vast, intricate networks of power and money and agents.

As for your challenge to me to find a monopoly in a genuine free market... ha-ha. When has there ever been a genuine free market in the history of the world?

Libertarians and Anarchists live in a wish world, they seek a world that never was and never will be, given the nature of man. They are idealists...like the religionists who argued about the number of angels the head of a pin...they argue about how a totally free people would live, how a 100% capitalist society would or should be set up...

No way. Ever. The most that can be hoped for is limited government, limited monopoly (Is there such a

MURDER BECOMES EXECUTION  
WHEN IT IS COMMITTED BY A  
BUREAUCRAT FOR HIS  
BUREAUCRACY.



thing?) and larger areas of personal freedom.

The trend now is toward ever more dependence on government by a citizenry made ever more powerless and ever more afraid. The decline of the small, relatively self-sufficient farm, and the increase in the numbers of landless workers in cities has resulted in ever bigger government, because those vast numbers of renters are at base exquisitely vulnerable. They do not control their shelter and they do not grow their own food. Unconsciously, they are terrified, and they naturally seek security...in government controls and promises.

Change the basics of life in this and other industrialized countries and you will change everything. Until you do that, you're indulging in fantasy.

#### LETTER FROM GEORGE WARREN

June 6, 1977

'I killed an afternoon going to see STAR WARS today. If you don't come in all bristly, with a cob up your ass and daring the movie to be any good, you may just wind up enjoying the hell out of it. The special effects...well, on this count 2001 was kindergarten and this is about the eighth grade. Some of it is unscientific, I suppose, but I don't give a goddam. It is a PLANET STORIES movie, not a Hal Clement, and that's not a good ground on which to criticize it. And as a PLANET STORIES opus it is absolutely terrific. It is quite obviously the only substantial sf movie ever made by a hardcore sf fan, and Lucas has been absolutely honest with himself about putting together a script that aims at the part of himself that took up reading sf in the first place -- at maybe 17 or so. As a result, the hero is deliberately left only partly characterized so that the reader (Lucas) can read himself into him. There are holes in the plot here and there that you could drive a spaceship through, but who gives a damn? The story keeps moving, and the wide-screen outer-space stuff moves right along with it; the ending is edge-of-the-chair stuff, with mindblowing effects all over the joint. It is not a perfect movie but well worth the dough you spend on it. I am going back tomorrow to see it with the wife and will take the kid maybe a month from now.

'The actors are all earnest little-theatre types except Alec Guinness (who seems to be playing Gandalf) and James Earl Jones (uncred-

ited, but the voice is unmistakable. Why? ) who plays the villain, a nasty in black armor. The best characterized people in the show are the robots. The one called SPO sounds for all hell like Roddy McDowell. Anyway, the camera and the set designer and the special-effects man are the real stars of the show (plus perhaps Ed Hamilton and Leigh Brackett and the young Poul Anderson and a few others like that ). And for the effects and the soundtrack score and the gigantic sweep of the visuals I will forgive the movie anything, anything.'

7-4-77 Jimmy Carter, Jimmy Carter is having his energy commissar set up a plan for gasoline rationing. He does seem very intent on forcing a drastic cut in our need for middle-east oil. Of course he will deny any plan to use rationing...this is only a contingency plan in case the arabs get pissed off about something we do and decide to pressure us/punish us.

You do believe what your federal government tells you, don't you? After all, when they printed all those billions of gas rationing stamps in 1973-4, and denied printing them, didn't you believe them then? Those stamps are waiting....

Then there's this report yesterday that there is a plan to establish a U.S. military base in Israel.

Something is going on, being planned or seriously contemplated, and the American public will be the last to know, as usual.

7-9-77 Ten days from now, on July 19th, I will be 50 years old. Incredible! I refuse to believe one-third of my life is gone.

# A STAR TREK fanne called from Seattle a few weeks ago and wanted to know if it was true that Harlan Ellison had resigned from SFWA in high dudgeon and if so was I going to publish Harlan's acrimonious speech on the matter.

I had not heard of this event, so I wrote Harlan. He wrote back that yes he had resigned and made a speech about it, but that it has been sold to Andy Porter, and it will appear in an upcoming issue of ALGOL.

That should be an interesting item, to say the least.

MONOLOG CONTINUED ON PAGE 68

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### SAVE A HASSLE AND EXTRA EXPENSE

IF YOU MOVE I NEED YOUR FORMER ZIPCODE AND YOUR NEW COMPLETE ADDRESS.

I'M A TELL YOU  
ONE MORE TIME,  
TONY. SEND A IN  
YOUR OLD ZIP CODE  
OR DIE!





'The cool weather did some good; my peas were complaining of the heat and being sluggish --- after the cool wave they've put on about two feet of growth. Anyway, after watching the hail and all that, I'm now not feeling guilty about not putting out the tomatoes and squash.'

# LETTER (AND DRAWINGS) FROM MIKE GILBERT:

May 9th, 1977

'Here's some news: Sheila Elkin Gilbert is now handling sf for Nal/Signet; they're looking for manuscripts from new writers (previously published).

'My set of wargames' rules and figures based on H. Beam Piper's LORD KALVAN OF OTHERWHEN should be out by June. We are now working with Andre Norton on doing the same for the Witch World series.



I would imagine log cabins, unless you're going to panel the inside, would give problems in naked wiring and plumbing. Whazzat? Candles....well water....an outhouse?

We've had three days of hot weather in Portland and the strawberries are really turning red. The corn is shooting up and the beets are marvels. We've taken 4 salads (of outer leaves) from the lettuce plants. Have to let them grow again for a week, I think. Should plant more.



'I really agree with you on government; I never vote myself---I don't believe in voting unless there is a "No" vote on the ballot --- I don't even want to encourage them.

'Self-sufficiency---yes. That's one reason why we're looking at those log cabin kits [the only viable low-cost housing] and land in Penn.



'Actually, I rather like the idea of factories and people moving south; it'll get the population away from here and maybe bring some civilization to the area. I wouldn't go---I like it cool and I like weather---even such events as last winter.

We just had the May cold wave; I'm huddled about the TV with my big outdoor house plants, and flats of tomato & vine crop seedlings awaiting the warmup tomorrow, when they can go back out.

## LETTER FROM E.C. TUBB

13 June 1977

'SPR 21 received and thanks but, man, what are you doing to me? A superb issue with a fantastic cover and scads of reviews - so many reviews but I miss your usual acid-in-depth comments and what happened to Alter? No, the thing which disturbs me - and this is a mild word - are the political comments which create a sullen fury and a terrible sense of frustration. Because I know that no matter what you say and do there is no hiding place. Look, I live in a culture governed and run by the worst bunch of cynical self-seekers this island has ever known. Our economy has been ruined by either deliberate saboteurs or idiots - and I can't be sure which we are saddled with. Certainly no responsible politician in his right mind could have deliberately wreaked such havoc - but are idiots responsible? The thing is we - England - has been subjected to the whims and theories of economists and do-gooders and those who want to put ideals into practice without ever stopping to think of the inevitable results. It's happened faster here and is more thorough because of the 'old boy' network which ensures that public schools and universities proliferate a special type of government official and politician who are totally without practical experience of everyday living and have no moral obligation to those they rule.

'The result?

'Decimalisation and metrication coupled with entry into the common market has ruined our economy. Unlimited immigration has created a racial problem which will flower in years to come in a way I'm glad I won't be around to see. We are short of houses and yet homes stand rotting. We have departments created to 'create' jobs for young people who leave school unable and unfitted to gain employment - more than two million in the last census left school after eleven years of tuition unable to read or write. Universities turn out a stream of graduates skilled in the social sciences, social welfare, art appreciation and what have you and are unemployable because they lack commercial skills. Taxes are crippling and will get worse because too many who work are paying for the old who have pensions, the idle who get more money by not working than working, and the social services which guarantees homes, food and money for all who are destitute - providing you aren't self-employed, were born here and don't have a large family of hungry children.

'A MORE SINISTER ENEMY TO THE NOVELIST, AND INDEED TO READING ITSELF, IS THE "TEACHING" OF THE NOVELIST IN THE ACADEMY BY TEXTUAL ANALYSIS. THE CRITICS AND PROFESSORS, SAUL BELLOW HAS SAID, HAVE BEGUN TO SEE THEMSELVES AS THE TRUE HEIRS AND SUCCESSORS OF THE CLASSICS. THIS IS MILD COMPARED TO GORE VIDAL'S EXTENSION OF THE ATTACK: FOR HIM THE UNIVERSITY HAS BECOME AN INDUSTRIAL CORPORATION OR SELF-INTERESTED BUREAUCRACY IN WHICH THE OBJECT ANALYZED IS THOUGHT TO BE INFERIOR TO THE ANALYSIS ITSELF.

V.S. PRITCHETT, THE NEW YORK REVIEW, 5-26-77

'I tell you, Dick, you have to be here to see it to believe it - an Alice In Wonderland system which guarantees poverty to those who try to be self-sufficient and to any who want to opt out of the system. That sounds paranoid, I know, but, damn it, I feel paranoid. Inflation at around twenty percent - and the government is giving all on welfare a fourteen percent raise in cash to compensate them - while wages are to be held around five percent uplift. Any system which actively encourages a thinking man to quit his job and go on welfare because he can get, if he is married with a few kids, twenty-five percent more cash in his hand, is sick and corrupt.

'And I'm helpless. Helpless!

'Too old to get a snug place in a union-protected job. Too thrifty to qualify for welfare. Unable to emigrate because there is no nation - now that our 'liberals' gave away our empire - willing to take me. The reverse, naturally, does not apply. It seems that half the world is entitled to come to England and be met as they step off the plane by social workers eager to tell them of their 'rights' and to make sure they are housed and fed and given money - and I'm not painting a phonetic picture, this actually happens. You've got something like it in New York with the Puerto Ricans. Magnify the problem and remember that England is a small country and we have all the Carribean, India, Pakistan and half Africa together with assorted islands to contend with and you'll understand why TV series's like the SURVIVORS have such appeal (In case you haven't heard of it yet, SURVIVORS is where a plague hits the world and leaves only one alive out of every thousand.).

'And there's no escape.

'It's no good trying to grow your own food in an urban area; there isn't enough land. And you can't rig up personal heating - not all of us, anyway, if you can then you're lucky. And stocking up with tools - over here guns are out because it's against the law to defend your life or your property - and all the rest of the survival essentials because, no matter what, you'll still be a victim. They'll get you either by raising rates (taxes) on your home. Taxes on your assumed income. Charges on this or the other. They'll drive you to welfare and the tender mercies of the host of social workers who just love to crack their little whips. Or they'll post a compulsory purchase order on your house (Take what we offer and get the hell out of it - now! Freedom, English style in the 20th Century. You know - the thing we fought a war to win?)

'Talking of freedom. Who has it? now, was it never built?

'Answer - no one.

'Freedom is choice and there isn't a government in the world or a bureaucrat or a council worker who doesn't do their best to limit your choice.

'Help!

'I wanna go back!

'Back to the good old days when I had a future and politicians still held the old-fashioned notion that they owed something to those who had elected them. To when there were such things as morals and ethics and restraint and a concern over what others might be thinking. To when there was the appreciation that if you drank too deeply of the life-force of any creature you weakened it beyond hope of recovery.

'Back to when newsstands were bright with the anodyne of the pulp mags and intellectuals hadn't 'discovered' sf and writers were glad to write and be published and didn't act like temperamental opera stars beating their chests in anguished farewells or scream like outraged virgins over a mispelled comma and a man could say what he considered to be the basics of good story-telling without being blasted with viciously insulting diatribes. Back to when there were no Huges or Nebulas. No professors stepping from the vales of Academia to pontificate with absurd verbosity on the God-like attributes of an author they profess to find equal to the scribes of immortal truths. Back to when 'seminal influence' was something to do with having children and when sex was for spicy stories and couplings and triplings and the taste of vaginas and fellatio and all the boring mishmash of it had no place in Sf because it wasn't then and isn't now and never will be either science fiction or fantasy as we know it even though it is fantasy of a kind.

'Back to when life was simple and to read Sf was to enter worlds of escape and not to be ashamed of it or to feel obligated to make it more than what it was intended to be. Back to being a fan and to enjoy sharing the pleasure of a mag with others and to swap ideas and to dream - ah, by the gods, to dream... of the perfect fammag, of joy untrammelled, of a land where all could live in harmony, of ships which reached out to the stars, of heroes and heroines and of...

'What ever became of the Slan-shack?

'Why, when we so badly need it

'Dick - I appeal to you - how else can we survive?'

We can't survive, Ted. Change is eternal, entropy always wins, and the cycles of history continually grind away on their cans.

INSANITY: THINKING ALL YOUR ENEMIES ARE DISORGANIZED.

OF COURSE NOBODY WILL TELL YOU HOW LONG IT TAKES TO DO WHAT THEY DO.

WE'VE BEEN GROSSLY OVERSTAFFED FOR TWENTY YEARS!



MONOLOGUE CONTINUED FROM PAGE 66

# A few days ago, returning from the Westcon in Vancouver, B.C., Old friend Bruce Pelz, wife Elaine, and three... or was it two... other fans accompanying them in the VW bus/van, stopped by to visit for an hour or so.

I showed them the house, the offices, the gardens... the usual tour of Geis Manor, and had laid upon me by Elliot Weinstein (one of the fellow travellers) two volumes of an invaluable publication called THE FILLOSTRATED FAN DICTIONARY.

It was completed in 1974 and is alphabetically, a source of amaze and delight to me, since it is also by function a kind of encyclopedia of fandom, too, and gives off with a complete reading a sense of fan history as well.

There are many, many cartoons and drawings, as well as a listing of the Hugo and Nebula Awards from their beginnings to 1974 and 1973 respectively.

These volumes are offset, in the 5-1/2 x 8-1/2 format. And nowhere, for Chrissakes, is there a price mentioned. And the only address I can find for the man is 7001 Park Manor Av., North Hollywood, CA 91605. Write and ask for purchasing info, is all I can advise. They're worth getting.

I THREW IT AWAY



# OTHER VOICES

## SENSE OF DUTY

A REVIEW OF ALGIS BUDRYS' MICHAELMAS

By Charles Platt

Algis Budrys has now achieved more than any other science fiction writer whose reputation was made in the 1950s: He has transcended his early successes.

While Bradbury and Asimov seem unable to face following up their classics, while Clarke, Herbert, and Heinlein have produced superior pot-boilers, but potboilers nonetheless, and while Bester has evaded the challenge by taking off on an interesting but idiosyncratic sidetrack, Budrys alone has held focus on the essence of his writing of twenty years ago. And he has developed its subtlety, humanity, and relevance so much in his new novel, MICHAELMAS, that it surely ranks among the most accomplished, flawless science fiction that anyone has yet created.

MICHAELMAS is set in the late 1990s. An intelligent computer has developed secret access to international communications and data processing networks -- access to every computer memory, bank account, tax record, radio broadcast, teletype transmission, magazine subscription list, electronic building service, automatically sorted piece of mail, highway traffic signal, and telephone conversation in the world. In control of the computer is its designer, a TV journalist named Michaelmas. Secretly, he wields the power of a dictator, although unlike most dictators he is entirely benevolent. He uses his global reach to avert war, alleviate hunger, and impose rough justice on corrupt government officials. He is a modern Santa Claus. He saves the world.

His motives are not the usual ones. He is not driven by greed for power, for money, or for public acclaim. His job is unrewarding and he does it anonymously, with weary compassion, out of a sense of personal duty.

This word "duty" is, I think the key to the whole book, and to Budrys as a writer. I do not use the word in the military sense. When a soldier does his duty, he follows orders from an authority; but Budrys's hero is his own authority, obeying orders from no one but himself. His sense of duty is a self-imposed obligation; he may not enjoy the task, but he cannot shirk it if he is to remain true to his conscience and abilities.

Characters in earlier Budrys novels have acted similarly. Hawks, in ROGUE MOON, submits to his own cruel experiment, because it is his duty to do so, as a scientist. Rogers, in WHO?, wearily does his CIA duty, following a man who himself did his duty, as a patriot, and was grievously hurt in the process.

Budrys shows this same sense of duty, to himself as a writer. He has written this novel so meticulously, with such thoroughness, he seems obviously to be striving for excellence -- yet I sense this is not motivated by hopes for acclaim, or even by a narcissistic enjoyment of his own talent. He does his job well because, like his hero, he assumes this is the only worthwhile way of doing it.

There are a few other writers whose work reveals a similar attitude -- never taking an easy way out, compromising, or showing laziness. C.M. Kornbluth's later stories come to mind, carefully crafted, without affectation or pretensions. A less obvious comparison would be the perfect little mysteries written by Dashiell Hammett featuring his "continental op," the unglamorous, unnamed private eye who, like Hammett himself, just wanted to do his work well, for its own sake, with a minimum of fuss.

The integrity of such writing should shame those who produce facile work expediently, for quick money. And its elegant efficiency ridicules the pyrotechnics of self-conscious literary stylists in love with their own cleverness. (Tact inhibits me from naming names.)

MICHAELMAS is a utopian novel. In its scenario, unnecessary waste, human suffering, administrative blunders, political corruption, and excessive greed have all been minimized, because they are all being covertly monitored and controlled by information-processing equipment that is itself controlled by a dictator of sound judgment. A dangerously authoritarian vision; the selfless humanity of Budrys's dictator is all that makes the idea attractive rather than terrifying, with technology as savior rather than nemesis. Really, such a picture is dishonest, because in real life there is no Santa Claus. The novel is wish-fulfillment rather than a workable blueprint for global salvation.

And yet it is a breathtaking insight into the potential benefits of technology. Budrys conveys a profound understanding of the real utopian possibilities of our "global village," with its wonderful yet frightening capacity for instantan-



eous communication, sudden change, and contraction of both space and time. (The momentous events in the novel are compressed into 24 hours, enacted on several continents, scheduled to the nearest second, and dramatized by an international cast of characters.) Science fiction has dealt often enough with giant computers, desperate bids to save or sink humanity, wonders of modern science, and the rest. Budrys is the first author who, to me, has made all of this real enough to feel, as pervasive forces that can affect us intimately.

At the same time, the novel reiterates themes from his previous books. In particular, we have his recurring obsession with identity. In *WHO?*, the problem was to prove the identity of Martino, a prosthetically rebuilt man. In *ROGUE MOON*, Hawks was haunted by his inability to establish his own identity objectively, after he had been reconstituted as a new person by his "death machine". Now, in the new novel, one problem is to prove that an astronaut has been replicated by a hospital as a faked version of his dead self; and Michaelmas worries that a woman he is interested in may have been similarly re-made during her stay at the same medical facility. This questioning of identity, roles, and motives, doubting that anything, including one's own self, can be the way it seems to be, seems to reflect a deep fear of things that are uncontrollable and unknown. Most major characters in *ROGUE MOON* are phobic about the ungovernable aspects of their psyches. And Michaelmas's whole life is dedicated to fighting the outside forces of global disorder, questioning every statement of fact and examining every conversational resonance, including his own. ("It's always best to question yourself," he remarks.)

Faced with uncertainty, Budrys's characters usually respond with problem-solving logic. They tackle their dilemmas with the precision of bomb-disposal experts, dismantling and examining each component of the problem with gentle, obsessive care, confident that, whatever the dangers of the operation, all secrets must be revealed by the scientific method. Clearly Budrys believes in science (this book is a testament to its power for good as opposed to evil). Martino methodically disassembles a tractor's gearbox and lectures on the faithfulness of machines if they are well-treated; Michaelmas cooks his evening meal with the systematic discipline of a laboratory chemist; the characters order their own lives as if in the belief that out of order can grow security, while out of disorder can only come chaos and suffer-

ing.

But this obsession with control does not negate humanity. Budrys's greatest strength is his renaissance-man capacity to mix sensitively with science. His technologically expert characters are always touchingly vulnerable people. Michaelmas himself is a sad, romantic figure, mourning the death of his wife in 1968 Chicago riots, but unable to risk a new involvement. Afraid of his own alienation, his self-imposed solitude, his mental "dark places," his one pleasure is conversing with his child and only friend -- the computer that he developed from what was originally a phone-freak "blue box".

Other characters are equally memorable, and they are drawn from contemporary life, as opposed to the usual science fiction writers' reference library of useful stereotypes. For example, Papashvilly, the cosmonaut, with his genealogical heritage of restlessness and his romantic urge to stretch out into the unknown. "They have always known they will be left behind. That's why they're so careless and surly," he says, of Earth-dwellers who will cling to the security of their homes.

There are other epigrams, unpretentious but relevant. Of politicians, Michaelmas says, "They always go to bribes when they're not sure they're on top, and coercion when they are. That's all they know. They don't really believe anyone would help them just on their merits."

Such asides are unusual in science fiction, because science fiction usually distances itself from reality, because it is so hard to accommodate all the subtleties of everyday reality in a predictive context. A science fiction scenario usually has limits, like a frame around a picture. Within these limits, all is consistent. Outside them, other factors are conveniently ignored. But in *MICHAELMAS*, there is no frame; the picture is global. Aspects of electronics, engineering, journalism, sociology, politics, economics, medicine, and most of all, human feeling are all integrated into one great vision of how the world works.

This alone is a remarkable achievement. It is given an extra dimension by the book's great sense of integrity -- elements of authoritarian wish-fulfillment regardless. Driven by his own demanding values, his duty to his own capacities as a fine writer, Budrys has set new standards -- for himself, and for any other author who aspires to write science fiction at its highest, hardest level.

#### DARK CRUSADE

By Karl Edward Wagner  
Warner Books, 222 pages, \$1.50

#### Reviewed by Mark Mansell

In the recent few years, Karl Edward Wagner's sagas about Kane, his immortal, doomed warrior, have gained for themselves a readership that follows Kane's exploits with an enviable enthusiasm. *DARK CRUSADE*, the latest Kane novel, well justifies that enthusiasm. In *DARK CRUSADE*, an outlaw gains control of an ancient demonic cult with intentions of controlling the world. Kane's actions both for and against the cult, form the basis of this intriguing, fascinating tale. To give the plot away would be worse sin than telling the ending of a whodunit, but let me say this: this novel is swords and sorcery like no one else has done, or probably can do. Instead of merely copying Howard's style, and the trappings of pulp heroes as many SFS writers are prone to do, Wagner creates an atmosphere and a style all his own, with a power of writing that puts those sad imitators of Conan to shame. The book has imagery and sensory effects to catch a reader by the collar and carry him into the story and into Kane's world.

Many of the scenes in this novel will startle the average SFS reader, since Wagner "tells it like it is" in a world where a man lives by his sword and his wits. To readers who are intelligent enough to take my advice and get this book, they'll get a real shock at some of these images, such as the children and their kickball, the hordes of the demon cult on the march, how some children handle a non-believer of the cult, the incredible battles, and the final scene. Don't let my references to children in the last sentence disturb you as a hint that the major protagonists are children, since they don't play any part to the plot, but serve to illustrate the barbarian world of Kane as only images of children in all their supposed innocence can.

Although this book is not as long as its predecessor, *BLOODSTONE*, it's power is just as great. If you have not got both, don't hesitate to treat yourself to a pair of novels that will not allow themselves to be put down.

Those familiar with the saga of Kane are tempted to put the tauntingly plausible labels of evil, monstrous, archetype of villainy, etc. on Kane, who is an other-world form of Cain, created along with mankind by a mad god for toys until Kane revolted, killing his brother to gain mankind's freedom, and was cursed

with eternal life unless he is killed, and the hellish killer's eyes of Kane. Such labels cannot apply to Kane who is far beyond such name-calling, Kane merely is.

This is a book not to be missed. You may hate Kane as a person, or root for him, but there is no way that you can ignore him or fail to enjoy DARK CRUSADE. We are fortunate that Karl Edward Wagner has taken time from his extremely superior work as editor of Carcosa Press (speaking of which, anyone who hasn't tried any of its books should do public penance), his novels for Zebra Books, and his editing of the Berkeley Books edition of the Conan series to write this novel. It is truly a magnificent work!

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TOMORROW, INC.

Edited by Martin Harry Greenburg  
& Joseph D. Olander.  
Taplinger Publishing Co., \$9.95

Reviewed by M.A. Bartter

This book of reprinted short stories has as its theme the evolution and results of Big Business. It points up how thoroughly the present has outstripped extrapolation. Concerns of the present are simply not envisioned, and the stories (which were not the most avant-garde when first published) seem sadly dated.

The focus is man's helplessness in a consumer-oriented, over-advertised society. There are several neat, tongue-in-cheek satires; Spinrad's "The Age of Invention" and Shekley's "Something for Nothing," for instance. But Ralph Williams' "Business as Usual, During Alternations" is the only story that presents business as an economic process. The others take one aspect out of context and deal only with that.

Reynolds' "Criminal in Utopia" is the most recent story, and it was published in 1968. Science fiction may not be 'up' on business as it is on technology; the current economic revolution was not anticipated. The stories all posit unlimited energy, source ignored. They assume an economy of superabundance, though Polih's "Midas Plague" is conspicuously absent. All the protagonists are men; no Dr. Susan Calvin here. Women are shown as cardboard victims of advertising. Nothing on women's lib, ecology, zero population growth, power shortages or scarce consumables.

This collection might quite well have been titled, YESTERDAY, INC.

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WHO'S WHO IN SCIENCE FICTION  
By Brian Ash  
Taplinger Publishing Co., \$8.95

Reviewed by M.A. Bartter

Brian Ash admits that "drawing the line between those who could be included and those who for the time can only be mentioned in passing was difficult, and the final choice is clearly open to argument." Omitting fantasy, weird tales, horror stories and "other minority genres" and authors who produce "an occasional 'genuine' SF story" while working in other genres should help him whittle the list down to a manageable size. But he includes Kobo Abe while excluding Jorge Luis Borges, and lists among "newer writers, and some less recent, who have no individual entries", T.J. Bass, Michael Bishop, Edward Bryant, Joe Haldeman, Doris Piserchia, Jerry Pournelle, Gene Wolfe...

Factual information on those included is sketchy. Year of birth, place of residence, major awards and titles and dates of novels is usually given. Date of death, where applicable, may be vague (mid-1960's) or must be inferred. And authors are subjected to such undescribed witticisms as "If Harlan Jay Ellison didn't exist it would be necessary for Brunner to invent him."

Having noted who is left out, it is odd to find Homer Eon Flint with a full paragraph. In case you didn't know, he wrote something which was called "the worst science fiction story ever published." He died in 1924. In 1966, Ash notes, novels derived from his stories were published. He fails to tell us how, or by whom, they were derived.

There is an abbreviated glossary of terms, a 'select bibliography of other books on Science Fiction,' and a listing of magazines and their editors.

Only those editors who also appear as authors are listed, however. Thus we find no listings for recent editors of GALAXY, for example. And editors come in alphabetical order, producing the unsettling condition where Ben Bova precedes John Campbell Jr. as editor of ASTOUNDING STORIES (became ANALOG Science Fiction/Science Fact in 1960)."

Let me put it this way: If I had paid cash money for this book, instead of getting a review copy, I would feel severely ripped off.

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STOP FOREST FIRES---CHOP DOWN ALL THE TREES

HEAVY METAL #1, 2, 3.

Reviewed by Buzz Dixon

The perennial question (well, almost) is---is a comic book really worth a buck fifty?

In the case of HEAVY METAL the answer is a qualified yes.

HEAVY METAL is two American reprints, a book excerpt, and an inane editorial in a French comic reprint zine. The American editors are fake fan who like science fiction but don't love it enough to do it right. The French authors and artists are of the same stripe.

What then is the virtue of HEAVY METAL?

"Sunpot" by the late Vaughn Bode and "DEN" by Richard Corben are the only American strips in the zine. Both have been reprinted time and again in underground comix and fanzines (indeed, "Sunpot" was originally serialized in GALAXY).

"Sunpot" is typical but not vintage Bode. "DEN" on the other hand is a sequel to Corben's animated film, NEVERWHERE, and, when completely serialized, will run 96 pages. Corben is one of the leading stylists in the field, his art having a greater sense of light and substance than anyone since Will Eisner's "The Spirit." Parts of "DEN" have been retouched yet the story appears to be the same.

As for the French reprints, well, they're half rotten and half good. The bad strips include a montage strip, several "surrealist" (sic) strips which have long been out of vogue in America, some nearly pornographic one-shot, one-joke strips, and a self-indulgent fantasy about a photographer who plays with dolls.

The good stuff, on the other hand, is a hell of a lot better than most American comix. For example:

"Conquering Armies" by Dionnet and Gal (the American editors don't give the first names of most of their artists). In the distant past a vast group of interconnected armies set forth to conquer the world. At first it appears they are succeeding. The world is waging a strange and subtle form of guerrilla warfare on the haughty human army, whittling it down to size. Though the human figures are often stiff, the artwork is generally pretty good, especially in detail. The mood of the stories isn't the typical sword and sorcery type but rather a haunting sense of doom, similar to some of the earlier episodes of THE TWILIGHT ZONE.

"the Adventures of Yriss" by Bruillet and Alexis. A Lieberesque hero/thief rescues a pack of pretty

slaves (plus an ugly one) from some Howard-style monsters. The artwork is similar to "Barbarella" and the story is fast-paced. This strip strikes a blow for Ugly Lib--even the gross, fat old peg-legged woman participates in the climactic orgy.

"Arzach" (titled "Harzak" in issue #2) by Moebius. A "silent" comic strip (i.e., no dialog, sound effects or narration) which features some of the best art in the magazines. The protagonist (he's too amoral to be called a hero) journeys across a planet of bizarre cultures and localities. In the first episode he spies what he thinks is a beautiful woman, kidnaps her guardian/keeper, and returns for the girl only to discover she's a monster. He reacts not with the American-style face-contorting scream but with a look of mild disgust---much the same as if he'd discovered a pubic hair in his Big Mac. In his second adventure he's flying over a vast sea of flesh-eating plants and his pterodactyl is rapidly tiring. The only spot out of reach of the plants is a large ruin inhabited by a giant red ape. He tricks the ape to its doom and settles down on the structure for a much needed rest. The third episode begins with a 1910's style sports car racing across a ru in-dotted desert. The man driving enters one of the large ruins which is inhabited by a group of despondent, naked men. Despite being attacked and threatened by them, the man ignores them and repairs a machine. On a TV screen the protagonist of the first two episodes is seen pacing by his apparently dead pterodactyl. When the repairs are complete the pterodactyl comes to life. The original protagonist flies off and the repairman returns from whence he came.

**Caveat emptor.** Of 37 stories in three issues only 16 are worth anything. These episodes/stories (including the two reprinted American works) are wonderful and would please most fans.

The big question is if a buck fifty is too much for a zine with less than a 50% ration of good stories. Obviously for me the answer is yes. And I pity those who won't give HEAVY METAL a try. It's much better than anyone thought.

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**INHERIT THE STARS**  
 By James P. Hogan  
 Ballantine, 1977, \$1.50.

Reviewed by Elton Elliott

The blurb on the cover, quoting Isaac Asimov, screams: "Pure science fiction... Arthur C. Clarke move over!"

I must disagree, for like the Holy Roman Empire which was neither Holy nor Roman, nor an Empire, **INHERIT THE STARS** is neither pure, science, nor is it fiction.

By 'pure' I suspect the good doctor refers to the clarity of its extrapolation and the newness of its ideas. But believe me the ideas are hackneyed and juvenile, and the extrapolation is cloudy and inconsistent.

In fact the whole plot, which is centered on a 50,000 year old dead man found on the moon and the stunts to figure out where he came from, reads like third generation watered-down Velikovsky.



The style is turgid, with lumps of scientific gobbledegook. The reader also has to plow through pages of monologue ala Arcot, Wade and Morey, as the good professor lectures on this or that scientific principle.

Scientifically the book is a laugh. The ending is based on the hypothesis that the Earth captured the Moon only 50,000 years ago. That is flatly impossible. Such an event would cause perturbations in the Earth's orbit measurable today. Scientists have found Earth's present-day orbit incredibly stable.

Another major problem is Hogan's inept handling of his female characters; when they exist they are props,

they speak coyly about the hero (p. 178), they appear as pinups (p.179). There does not appear to be a single human relationship in the book that isn't portrayed on an adolescent level.

James P. Hogan does write enthusiastically, and the ending does contain effective pathos, but he needs to write better and he needs a strong editor, if he is to improve.

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**REG NOTE:** Lester del Rey, reviewing **INHERIT THE STARS** in the July **ANALOG**, gave it a very favorable judgement.

So here I sit wondering (with you, perhaps) if it is bad as Elton says, or good as del Rey says.

I'll do what you'd do if you had a copy--read enough to decide. I'll check back with you in a few hours.

Okay, I've read enough; the opening prologue and a couple chapters. I've sampled my way through the book and read the ending.

It's a bad novel. The style is wooden, clumsy, and in places a pain in the ass to read. It has an ironic ending, an ending beloved by beginning writers. The story is a variation of the Adam-&Eve-were-aliens-who-were-shipwrecked-on-Earth theme. The oldest sf idea in the world.

Lester del Rey gave this one, a Ballantine del Rey Book, a 'highly recommended.'

I have to agree with Elton, though I feel Elton is given to overkill and exaggeration.

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**THE MINOTAUR FACTOR**  
 By Stuart Stern  
 Playboy Press, 1977.

Reviewed by Dean R. Lambie

The "ghetto" walls have two sides. While sf authors--Malzberg and Silverberg are recent examples--often lament the confinement of the genre, the sf community should be equally concerned about the ones that get away, the bright fish in the Mainstream.

Last year, scant attention was given Lawrence Sanders' magnificent tour de force, **THE TOMORROW FILE** (Putnam/Berkley), although that ominous picture of the transformation of the Dept. of HEW into the cradle-to-grave Dept. of Bliss clearly was worthy of Hugo consideration. Curiously, when sf is marketed without the genre label, however, as was the case with **NIGHT GILLS** by Dean R. Koontz and **THE CLEWISTON TEST** by Kate Wilhelm (in paperback, at least), the science in the sf is



watered down, less focal, and therefore, less plausible.

Happily, a fine example of solid, though unlabeled, science fiction has surfaced from "across the pond" in the form of THE MINOTAUR FACTOR by Stuart Stern. An English psychiatrist, Stern has written a powerful first novel that is aptly described on the cover as a "suspense thriller." Whatever reason author or publisher may have had for not marketing this psycho-pharmacological detective story about a global epidemic of acute lethal catatonia under the sf label might well be valid. Certainly the garish cover and "suspense thriller" blurb will attract a broad readership, but the sf community definitely should not pass by.

The story is told in a competent, chronological format with a number of viewpoint characters, all of whom hold pieces of the three-part puzzle: why is a fatal form of psychosis on the rise among teenagers; what are the causes and possible cure; and what covert group stands to gain from a delay in finding a solution while thousands of teenagers are dying?

An international task force is assembled under the direction of Sir George Upton of the British health establishment, and Drs. David Snyder and Jack Freiberg of the National Academy of Sciences and NIMH respectively. John Cain, a British medical journalist, witnesses a particularly bloody early case of acute lethal catatonia, and manages to attach himself to Sir George's team. The characters are well fleshed, whether hero or villain, and even Sir George's connections with the CIA are believable.

The search, first for the agent responsible for the predisposing genetic changes, and then for the crucial environmental factor that precipitates the lethal psychoses, leads the reader on a geographical hopscotch from London to Washington to San Francisco to Wingate, Minnesota and back again. In all locales, the reader has the feeling that Stern has been there, not merely looked at a road map.

The drama builds to a fine pitch of bio-medical ethics, as the team of psychiatrists and neuroscientists comes to realize that the only solution is, literally, through human sacrifice. The ending is a fine piece of tightly crafted emotion--there are no loose ends.

Sf novels by psychiatrists are rare. The last one of note was TETRA-SOMY TWO (Doubleday, 1974) by the Seattle doctor writing under the name "Oscar Rossiter." Like "Ros-

siter," it is unfortunate that Dr. Stern must necessarily devote most of his time to his patients. Unfortunately, that is, for sf fans who would welcome his command of the neurosciences, and his flair for both British and American idiom, in more works of the quality of THE MINOTAUR FACTOR.

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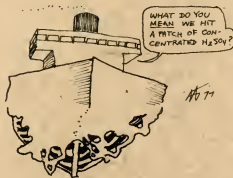
#### A HERITAGE OF STARS

By Clifford D. Simak

Berkley, 1977, \$7.95, 219 pages

Reviewed by Dave Wixon

It shouldn't be too much of a surprise to learn that authors tend to use their familiar things in their work -- I've been reading a lot of the work of Fredric Brown lately, for instance, and have noticed his frequent use of newspapermen, linotype machines, etc. Cliff Simak, too, is a newspaperman, but Cliff's work comes out differently -- and perhaps it reveals where Cliff's heart really has been. He writes of univer-



sities, in an image of calm and tradition, a peaceful search for knowledge and wisdom; he writes of the countryside of the upper Midwest -- especially the borders of the rivers. And he writes of quiet people, of pets, and of robots.

And his images are repeated through a number of his books. It is as if Simak is, in his novels, spinning out permutations of the basic image-combinations in his head, telling different possible stories that might be made of the same basic elements and characters: a quieter, more calm Earth, and the men, animals and robots which would be at home on it...

A HERITAGE OF STARS is another such novel, one of the group of Simak works which, totally unrelated in story line, nevertheless manage to seem cut from the same cloth -- A CHOICE OF GODS is another.

Cliff told me once that he does not pick the titles of most of his

books; this makes me feel better, because as a title, A HERITAGE OF STARS, although technically representative enough of the book, seems uninspired and rather dull.

Not so the book, which is the story of the revival of Earth from an age of barbarism. More than a thousand years before, man apparently revolted against his technology, and destroyed it; the results were necessarily drastic -- for many, fatal. Growing up in what was once Iowa, Thomas Cushing heard of the University of Minnesota, walled-in city-state, relic of ancient learning, perched amid the tribalized remains of the Twin Cities.

Accepted into the nearly monastic life of the University, Tom attains an education, and in doing so stumbles upon a legend about an ancient Place of Going to the Stars. Although he fights it, the idea grows in him as an obsession, and eventually he strikes out westward, down the Minnesota River valley and across the plains, to become an instrument of history.

Summed up this way, of course, Simak's plot is less than unusual. But essence of Cliff Simak is in this book, and it shows. It shows in the calm, straight-forward storytelling. It shows in his choices of characters and places. But most of all it shows in his images, the pictures he has pulled out of his mind: the scholar of a barbaric age, toiling by candlelight to pass his knowledge on to the future; a garrulous robot who kills bears; an old horse who dances with aliens...

But no image stands so stark in this book as that of the view Cushing had one night peering down from a mound of rubble at one of the wild tribes of Minneapolis, howling and dancing madly in the firelight around a pyramid made of the skulls of robots...

What Cliff Simak gives us in this book is another series of the vivid images in his mind of the post-technological Earth. He has built the story around the basic elements he likes to deal with: the countryside he loves and the characters he would like to have there to enjoy it with him. And in doing so he has provided us with yet another of the calm, wise stories -- a quiet adventure -- that are unique to him.

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FETISH: A PERVERSED, MENTALLY ILL APPROACH TO SEX; THE BASIS OF MANY HAPPY MARRIAGES.

--Arthur D. Hlavaty  
THE DIAGONAL RELATIONSHIP

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# THE VIVISECTOR



SCHADENFREUDE



## THE MALACIA TAPESTRY

By Brian Aldiss  
Harper & Row, 1977  
313 pages, \$8.95

Alas! Alas! Ring the bells in mourning and warning! Brian Aldiss has contracted DHALGRENITIS! This dread disease, also known as the I WILL FEAR NO EVIL syndrome, has been ravaging the science fiction field of late. It strikes only the great. Its chief symptom is self-indulgent escapism, its end result artistic rigor mortis. The reason it strikes master writers only is that anyone who hasn't got such a reputation that anything by him or her gets into print won't get into print, and somehow that's not the same situation.

The specifics of this particular case are quite like those of DHALGREN. THE MALACIA TAPESTRY is set in an imaginary city, considerably more hygienic and in a better state of repair than Bellona, and located somewhere in Eastern Europe rather than in the American Midwest. Malacia seems to exist in an alternate timeline, although no rationale for it is provided by the author. It's a stagnant society where little progress is allowed. Its features are something like those of the European Renaissance, with a little bit of the 18th century thrown in. Byzantium co-exists with it, and Ottoman Turks gather beyond the walls. Somehow Christianity has been all but submerged in the mystery cults of late Roman times (which might have happened if the Christians hadn't persecuted everybody else) and the result is two rival, syncretic religions, the Natural, which holds that Satan created the Universe, God is an intruder whose case is hopeless, and mankind should side with the Devil; and the High Religion, which is pretty much the same only it says God can win if mankind helps him out. Also there's Mithraism, which

is disreputable. Alongside this, the level of technology is quite high: crude photography exists, as do aerial balloons, cannons, and printed books. On the completely fantastic side, domestic dinosaurs are held to be the ancestors of men. Anyone who believes the silly ape theory is burned as a heretic. Winged humanoids inhabit the upper towers of the city.

The problem with this potentially fascinating setting is it never comes to life. The details are irrelevant to the story because there isn't any story beyond a few vestiges of continuity among scenes. The pieces do not come together as a coherent whole, and the reason is that a setting won't hold up by itself. There have to be living and interesting characters so the fiction has some intersection with human reality, and there has to be some sort of plot, so the actions of the characters take on meaning. A story has to have, as the old saying (possibly first uttered by Fred Pohl) goes, interesting people doing interesting things in an interesting setting. (Not necessarily a fantastic one. You can make suburbia interesting if the people in it are.) Mervyn Peake, whose GORMENGHAST TRILOGY is somewhat like this in conception, was aware of these requirements. That's why his work has become classic in stature. Aldiss's never will. He goes on and on exploring his papier mache world, clearly enjoying himself, but creating tedium for the rest of us. Like Delany, I suspect, Aldiss has become so caught up in his private little world that he wants to remain there forever, continually inventing new nooks and crannies, all the while completely losing sight of

the structural and thematic needs of a novel. (Hence books of this type are inevitably long. At 313 pages, THE MALACIA TAPESTRY is relatively brief.)

At best we can hope for a sequel, an actual novel laid in Malacia which makes something of all the unexploited possibilities, but this time around we have the creation of the setting and little else. Like DHALGREN and I WILL FEAR NO EVIL, THE MALACIA TAPESTRY is a bloated, but ultimately hollow empty book. Huge sections (for Aldiss fifty pages, for Delany one or two hundred, for Heinlein an easy three hundred) could be excised at a stretch without any loss of substance, even any disturbance in the continuity. While absence of plot isn't necessarily a fatal lack (few mainstream novels, including the best ones, have much of what SF readers would call a plot) it certainly is in the absence of anything else. Although a few noises are made about Art and the Artist, nothing of consequence is said which couldn't be put into a single line of graffiti on the wall of an undergraduate dormitory, and there's hardly enough meat to this overinflated book for a short story, or even a shorter essay. (By the way, parts were run in ORBIT 12 as short stories. They make a lot more sense in context now, but are no more memorable.)

The characters are strictly one-dimensional. The least underdeveloped is Perian de Chirillo, who by convention should be called the protagonist. (But not by strict definition since the protagonist is the guy who overcomes the obstacle or at least tries to, and here there is no

conflict. At Clarion they identify the protagonist with the question, "Who hurts?" The answer this time inevitably comes out as, "Nobody." He's a young and impoverished actor, and something of a libertine, whose exploits with the ladies are frequently veiled in the kind allusions which must have seemed racy fifty years ago when James Branch Cabell used them, but are surely sophomoric now. Sex is one area in which THE MALACIA TAPESTRY differs from DHAL-GREN. It gets a GP rating, while Delany made up for his lack of anything to say with whopping portions of every sort of eroticism he could think of, making his book hard core pornography in the strictest sense of the word -- (e.g. sex for its own sake, with no value on any other level -- wait, did I say there was anything wrong with carrot books?)

Otherwise Perian has no salient characteristics, and the people around him are even less distinct. In a way it's perhaps fortunate that in this huge novel there are only four or five important characters -- you can tell the players without a program as long as you keep their names apart in your head. The only one in this whole dreary mess with a spark of humanity in him is Perian's senile father, whom he visits between pages 156 and 160. Aside from that, the novel itself provides a perfect analogy. Perian and company are involved in a primitive movie project, wherein the "actors" hold exaggerated poses for five minutes in front of the camera. The result is a slide show, accompanied by someone reading the narration. Aside from the father, they're all as stiff and lifeless as that.

The prose is, of course, immaculate. One hasn't expected anything less from Aldiss since his Ace Double days. But deft phrases do not a novel make, and good description won't hide a lack of substance. The vigorous intellect, keen sense of humor, clever invention, and intense emotional depth which Aldiss's admirers have come to associate with his works aren't there at all.

Sorry, folks, this isn't another HOTHOLE, or BAREFOOT IN THE HEAD or CRYPTOZOIC, or even a FRANKENSTEIN UNBOUND. It's more akin to REPORT ON PROBABILITY A, one of his less noble and complete failures. Anybody remember that?

THE LIGHT FANTASTIC (The Great Short Fiction of Alfred Bester, Vol. 1)  
Berkley-Putnam, 1976  
254 pages, \$7.95

STAR LIGHT, STAR BRIGHT (Vol. 2)  
Berkley-Putnam, 1977  
248 pages, \$7.95

What a delight these two books are right after the lifeless Aldiss! In them Bester proves once again he has long since lost the ability to write a boring word, and that he was what we'd now call a post-New Wave writer all the way back in the 1950s -- i.e. someone vastly sophisticated in content and technique, but retaining an interest in character and dramatic values. Come to think of it, I'm not sure the rest of the field has caught up with him yet.

One of the real surprises in the first volume is a long novella from UNKNOWN called HELL IS FOREVER. This is its first hardcover appearance, having been reprinted only once (in THE UNKNOWN FIVE, ed. D.R. Benson, Pyramid, 1964) since its original publication, so it is very much a "lost" Bester story, and a reminder of how good he was how far back (1943). Bester tends to downgrade his early work (the only other 1940s' piece present is "Adam and No Eve" -- I once saw a fan ask him to autograph the ASTOUNDING printing and he let out a groan at the sight of it which seemed to say, "Why do you haunt me with my past sins?"), and he is probably right to keep his THRILLING WONDER efforts under the rug, but he's just as correct in including this. He's not ashamed of it, he says, but paternally proud of his former self. "I feel like a father to that kid and I think he shows promise in HELL IS FOREVER... He might become a pro some day." Certainly, as he admits, the characters are stereotypes and the British dialogue is 100% Hollywood English Butler, but there's considerable imaginative and descriptive power in this tale of five self-proclaimed decadents who find themselves projected into universes of their own design. The episodes range from sheer terror in a modern vein (NIGHT GALLERY, minus the CREEPY comic book stuff) to manic comedy. The story is also of interest as Bester's only fantasy. He normally hates the stuff, you see, both the Lovecraftian unpronounceable scholl and writers like Cabell (but the scene in which the guys discover God and the Devil are a single and not too bright clerk seems right out of JURGEN, though admittedly via Rice's THE ADDING MACHINE) but he was enchanted by UNKNOWN, and this glorious fin de ev-erything was the result.

The other stories are mostly comedies, showing the kind of lunatic, brilliant invention only occasionally in the forefront of his novels (e.g. the Scientific People sequence of THE STARS MY DESTINATION). He has always been, as I already said, ahead of the rest of us, so it's only logical that he'd gotten out of and attempt to run into the ground certain science fiction clichés which lesser writers perpetuate in dull earnestness. "The Men Who Murdered Mohammed" is surely the Penultimate grandfather paradox story, and "Adam and No Eve" makes another perennial slush pile favorite bite the dust. "Ms. Found in a Champagne Bottle" makes it impossible to take the machines-take-over story seriously again -- and in only three pages! With these Bester is doing the field a service by forcing everyone else to seek new subject matter. And face it, for all its claims of being a Literature of Ideas, when was the last time science fiction came up with a new idea? The field suffers from a terrific lack of originality of late.

A more recent effort, "The Four Hour Fugue" is a textbook example of how a master can throw away the textbook. You know the old and very sensible H.G. Wells rule about one premise per story. Bester has three, plus independent gimmicks which pop up like rabbits out of a hat. He can make it work, but I wouldn't advise many others to try.

Additionally, there is an introduction to each story, and an autobiographical essay, "My Affair with Science Fiction," in which Bester's engaging and out-going public persona comes across splendidly. He writes the way he talks. "Affair" is like a long, one-sided conversation (one-sided because when you come across someone that sharp, you listen), or a convention speech (the Bester speech, a subgenre unto itself) or an interview. (For comparison, see my interview with him in SF VOICES or Dave Truesdale's in TANGENT 6.) There's also an account in it of an utterly bizarre meeting with John W. Campbell which took place right before Dianetics first reared its charlatanic head, which very much backs up my contention that if Erich Von Däniken had submitted CHARIOTS OF THE GODS to ASTOUNDING about 1950, Campbell would have swallowed it hook, line and sinker.

These two books are long overdue, and an absolute must.

KINGDOMS OF ELFIN  
By Sylvia Townsend Warner  
Viking Press, 1977  
222 pages, \$8.95

I imagine many of you have never heard of this book or its author, due to the traditional fanish aversion to sampling anything by an unfamiliar name, especially when it's from outside the clearly labelled core of the field. If so, your loss. KINGDOMS OF ELFIN is high fantasy and at the same time comic fantasy, in the tradition of White's ONCE AND FUTURE KING, Cabell's Polcestes myths, and Lord Dunsany's early work. It is a collection of short stories, which have been running in THE NEW YORKER for the last five years, and thus have escaped the notice of most fantasy fans. I once asked Lin Carter why he didn't include any of them in THE YEAR'S BEST FANTASY when they so clearly belong there. The reason: He doesn't read THE NEW YORKER.\*

In any case, it will mean something to those who have been following the series when I say that all the Elfland stories published between 1972 and 1975 are included. Also there are two new ones. One later one, "The Duke of Orkney's Lordnardo," (Sept. 20, 1976), which is either a loose scrap or the first entry to Volume II, is not here.

As the title implies, the book is about Elfland, or more precisely, court life in the various Elfin kingdoms which co-exist with the human world from Ireland to Persia. (A map is provided on the endpapers.) The inhabitants are not Tolkienish elves or even Old Norse Saga ones, but fairies. Fairy is the noun, Elfin the adjective consistently throughout. These creatures are more like those described by Robert Kirk in his "The Secret Commonwealth" (a 17th century tract on the invisible world -- quoted in one of the stories -- which you can find in Peter Haining's "Clans of Darkness") and found in Scottish border ballads and lore. They are soulless creatures, halfway between Heaven and Hell and of no interest to either. Their kingdom is an image of the human world, but seen only by a few. The fairies themselves are four-fifths the height of a man, and winged, although their wings are apparently invisible even when the rest of them

isn't, because several times in the course of the series they live in Christian society and nobody says, "Hey! He's got wings!" Some of the things said about them are true, and some not. They are fond of stealing unguarded babies, but they're not immortal, just long-lived. According to Ms. Warner they have their feuds, vanities, foibles and fads just like the rest of us, only they have few emotions of any depth. They are often thoughtlessly cruel. At one point a changeling -- a fairy child left in place of the human one which was snatched -- with a penchant for medical explorations, begins with a dissection of the cat that nursed him (fairy infants won't take human milk), and ultimately performs an inadvertently fatal blood test on an old tramp suspected of being a fairy. The irony is the tramp is the stolen child the changeling has supplanted, now grown grey and turned out of the Elfin court. All the genuine fairy (he doesn't know he's one) can think of is selling the corpse to a medical school. And in another story the fairies think nothing of castrating two boys because custom demands that each new queen introduce a new Persian practice (Persia being the alleged homeland of the Elfin race), and they haven't got any eunuchs yet.

Fairies can also be overly concerned with scandals. In one of the new stories, "The Late Sir Glamie", a dead fairy knight reappears as a ghost, which is remarkable because fairies shouldn't have souls. Obviously his immediate ancestry is tainted by contact with humans. The resultant embarrassing situation is hard to hush up because the spectre won't cooperate.

The other new effort, "The Climate of Exile," is about a fairy who insists fairies do have souls, or can if baptised. An emissary is sent to the Elfin kingdom in Spain to observe the details of the proper method for disposing of heretics -- *auto da fe*. Even then, few deep passions are involved. It just seems like the proper thing to do.

Perhaps it's this absence of passion which makes the book less than it could be. Sometimes I think it's written by one of the fairies it describes. It isn't at all intense, and it is rarely vivid. Like many NEW YORKER writers, Ms. Warner is an immaculate prose stylist but sometimes a less than immaculate storyteller. She tends toward synopsis rather than developed action, telling rather than showing. She will describe someone's behavior patterns at length, then give him little chance to so behave. Everything is very condensed; most stories cov-

er whole lifetimes in a few thousand words, often straying from the topic in the process. "Kingdoms of Elfin" is very strong on event and incident, weak on character and imagery. Warner does not engage the senses. She may tell you what is going on, but it's up to you to figure out what it looked like or felt like.

The result is that many of the stories seem incomplete, and only flash to life briefly here and there. Certain scenes and inventions are superb, and they stick in the memory like beads without much of a necklace. There's a genuinely moving sequence in "Five Black Swans," as the many-centured Queen Tiphania of Elfhame lies on her deathbed remembering her long lost love affair with Thomas of Ercildoune, and "Visitors to a Castle" is alternately funny and wondrous as Welsh fairies with a knack for moving mountains by chanting "Be Thou Moved" find getting rid of a pesky lady on a bicycle a lot harder. But at times the reality of the whole thing fades away, and you find yourself forgetting how a given story turned out, not long after you have finished it. Perhaps it's best not to read this book all at once. The stories seem to run together and the highlights don't seem as good as they really are.

Despite any failings, the volume is recommended. It is certainly the best fantasy work of 1977 -- so far. It probably won't prove to be best of the year because, after all, THE SIMARILLION comes out in July in England, September in the U.S. But it will hold you over until then, and for a good while afterwards too.

P.S. Some enterprising person ought to fully investigate Sylvia Townsend Warner's connections with the fantasy field. She's hardly a stranger to it. Her first novel, LOLLY WILLOWES, or THE LOVING HUNTS-MAN (1926) is about a witch. She is T.H. White's biographer, and no doubt has been influenced by him. One of her early poetry books, OPUS 7, is dedicated to Arthur Machen. How well did she know him? Any influence either way? Listed are seven novels and seven collections, plus five books of poetry and the White biography. All the literary encyclopedias say she is best known for THE CORNER THAT HELD THEM, a novel about a medieval nunnery.



GREAT PROMOTIONAL GIMMICKS THAT  
DIDN'T MAKE IT DEPARTMENT:

\*There has been enough SF/Fantasy material in the magazine over the years to make possible an anthology, GREAT SCIENCE FICTION AND FANTASY FROM THE NEW YORKER, if the editors of that Distinguished Publication wouldn't consider it demeaning. I bet it would raise eyebrows in both our fandom and theirs.



paid for Edwin Corley's SARGASSO, sent everybody in the reviewing business little cards to which were stapled plastic bags containing dried specimens of genuine Sargasso sea weed, which, we are warned, makes up the heart of the Bermuda Triangle. Danger! Do not activate this weed aboard a boat or plane or Doubleday won't be responsible for what happens. Just put it in water and -- presto! -- instant Sargassum. Well nine died. I imagine the problem is I don't live close enough to the ocean to get sea water. I used fresh water. About as effective as raising sharks in your backyard pool. (One can only imagine what they sent the reviewers of JAWS.) But the instructions don't mention this little detail.

Gee, I wonder what would happen if you added the book to sea water?

#### A MIDSUMMER TEMPEST

By Poul Anderson  
Ballantine, 1975 & later printings  
207 pages, \$1.50

This was the book of the month for the local Mythopoeic Society chapter and I finally got around to reading it. I still see it on the stands, so it's worth a review. Pick it up. It's a very great curiosity, but not, alas, anywhere near as good as it should be. The conception is magnificent, but the execution leaves something to be desired. The big problem is, I suppose, that Poul Anderson isn't as good a writer as Shakespeare. When he starts messing with this sort of material he has to be, and he isn't so he falls short.

To explain: The novel is set in an alternate timestream in which the Bard wasn't the Bard but the Historian. The plays are literal truth, which not only means there was a Lear who raged against the winds, but a Macbeth who stabbed the king in his sleep at the behest of his wife, and a Hamlet in Eleventh Century Denmark who was somehow a Renaissance prince and not a viking, and so forth. Titania and Oberon still live in the English countryside, and somewhere in the Mediterranean is Prospero's island, magically invisible to ships.

The hero of our story is a real person (in our timestream), Prince Rupert, the nephew of Charles I, and the time is that of the English Civil War. The Roundheads are winning, and Puritan technology is stamping out all that was once magical in England. Railroads span the island. Steamships ply the channel...What? In the

1640s? Yes. This is one thing Anderson does splendidly. Shakespeare's plays are truth in every detail, you see. Therefore there were chiming clocktowers in Caesar's Rome, cannons in Hamlet's Denmark, etc. Obviously this world is technologically ahead of our own.

The plot involves a successful attempt by Rupert to escape the nasty theocrats, find Prospero's island, recover his magic staff and book, and rally the spirit world to the aid of the Cavaliers. In the end the cavalry comes to the rescue -- led by King Arthur.

The form of the novel is quite unusual (Experimental? New Wave?): An approximation of an Elizabethan verse play, complete with rapid scene changes and people speaking couplets as they leave. (Which they did in early Shakespearean plays, but not in THE TEMPEST.) Frequently both dialogue and narrative break into blank verse, and this is where we discover that Anderson isn't Shakespeare, or even Beaumont and Fletcher. The gimmick doesn't work much of the time. The poetry isn't good enough. It may be interesting for a short time (at the opening, he keeps it up effectively for two pages) but often it turns into turgid and awkward prose, not trippingly on the tongue but just plain tripping over its own convolutions. It should have been much more restrained, with more in simple prose, because Anderson is not a very good poet. And his dialect, especially hees attemptz to fake Spanish phonetically leek theez, gets to be a bit much at times.

But the most serious problem is the hero. Rupert is simply cardboard. He's mostly running around after this and that, seldom standing still long enough to be human. And when he does, his interpersonal scenes, especially his love scenes, are simply boring, which they would not be if the characters were three-dimensional or even a convincing two. Additionally, every time he seems to be cornered by the bad guys a rabbit (or railroad train) pops out of a hat, until it becomes obvious that the author is pulling strings in his favor. Suspense is lost. The final victory is an easy foregone conclusion. Never trust a hero who wins all his fights, except those required to ge' him captured for plot purposes.

This book is sometimes interesting, clever, bawdy and maybe it has touches of wonder (but not nearly as many as it should, if it dares to invoke two of the great wonder plays in English literature), but it's seldom moving or convincing. Poul's most ambitious, but not his best.

#### JUDGING A BOOK BY ITS COVER

I really must say something about the packaging of some of the Del Rey books I've been getting lately. The quality has fallen off abysmally since Ballantine SF turned into Del Rey Books. Even when they aren't, the books are made to look like trash.

Case in point is the new edition of Anne McCaffrey's RESTOREE (Del Rey, 1977, 252 pages, \$1.50) which sports an utterly hideous Hildebrandt cover showing a department store manikin of a woman in the arms of a husky, protective/domineering, scarred-but-ruggedly-handsome MMAANNN. Both are barefoot and the man, who seems to be wearing a bathrobe, is so gnarled and hairy from the knees down he makes one suspect he's a refugee from a hobbit transplant clinic.

The front cover blurp reads:

'In another body on another world, Sara risked her life for a man of power and for an alien dream!'

And on the back:

'She was a RESTOREE Kidnaped Torn from Earth by a bizarre and nameless black force, Sara had no idea where she was or why she was in a beautiful new body...

Enslaved Controlled by brutal guards and tamed by terror, she could not comprehend her role as a nurse\* for a man who appeared to be an idiot...

Awakened But she discovered that the planet she had been brought to was Lothar\*\* and that the man she was caring for was its Regent. Sara knew they had to escape -- and fast.'

In other words this book is made up to be (ahem -- draw breath) a science fiction/women's gothic/nurse/PRISONER OF ZENDA pastiche/S&M bond-

\*My italics here, to belabor the obvious.

\*\*The sidekick to a comic strip magician whose name I forget. Can't SF writers come up with new ones?

aperno novel.\*\*\* I was really disappointed that one of the space-ships in the background of that cover didn't have a light in the window...and a leather whip coiled down the spine might be in order too...

Seriously, I wouldn't buy a book like this in a million years, and I don't think my tastes are sufficiently eccentric that I don't represent a financially significant portion of the SF readership. Either the Del Rey's assume most people will buy anything, or they are splitting their leadership. I would pick up their edition of Silverberg's SON OF MAN (packaged tastefully, for instance, but never RESTORE!). I might be so bold as to suggest that they are doing the field no good at all with abominations like this. If the book is not as bad as all that, they are doing Anne McCaffrey a great wrong, and if it is, they're doing the rest of us one by publishing it. There hasn't been a packaging job this bad since Margaret St. Clair's THE SIGN OF THE LABRYS, which has achieved a certain infamous immortality. (By the way, I'm told it's a halfway decent book, though the publishers -- Bantam, 1964 -- did everything in their power to hide this.) I might also suggest that whoever is responsible for this be fired. No, shot. No, fired -- tied to a stake and with a pile of these covers for fuel!

#### REPRINTS:

##### CHILD CHRISTOPHER AND GOLDILIND THE FAIR By William Morris.

Introduction by Richard Matthews, Newcastle, 1977, 219 pages, \$3.45

This is one of Morris's minor works, despite all the hype given it in this edition (the introduction is one of the silliest bits of pseudo-scholarly exaggeration I've ever read), and it's not really a fantasy at all, since there is no supernatural element, even if the action takes place in an imaginary land. (Which could be a real one with the juggling of five or six words.) It's a retelling of the medieval tale of Havelok the Dane, that old bit, very popular with the commonsens, about the infant prince who is dispossessed, sentenced to be killed but saved by a loyal follower and/or guy who did not have the heart to do him in, raised under the most humble circumstances possible, but ultimately restored to throne, rightful kingdom, the girl, etc. Somehow the hero al-

ways mysteriously as the military prowess required to beat the baddies, even though he's had no training and medieval peasants were usually expressly forbidden to own weapons. But there's little doubt of the outcome, because Morris (less so that his sources -- some medieval romances have tragic endings, although this one doesn't) is too obviously on Child Christopher's side, and the bad guys (as usual) aren't that wicked after all, and despite a few clouds the world is bright and all is right so taste Delight while you may. (Until she gets pregnant. Morris wasn't nearly as prudish as his contemporaries.) The result is hardly compelling drama, but at least Morris writes well. He was one of the few masters of the artificially archaic style, and he is always readable. Sometimes his prose breaks into stretches of great beauty.

This probably isn't the place to start reading Morris. I would recommend THE WOOD BEYOND THE WORLD from Dover, or "Lindenberg Pool" and "The Hollow Land" in Newcastle's GOLDEN WINGS (168 pages, \$2.95) and if you can stand those, go on to the rest. Morris is for a very specialized taste.

CHILD CHRISTOPHER is for completists. There have only been three very limited printings previous to this one -- (Kelmescott, in the Collected Works, and Thomas Mosher's edition of 1900, from which this text is taken) and less than two thousand copies of those combined exist in the entire world. So Newcastle has done the Morris completist a great service by putting this rare book in general circulation for the first time.

I only wish they could have done it with a better cover. The one by Robert Kline is thoroughly bad, and centuries out of period. Yeah, there's a mounted knight on the back, but the hero and heroine on the front look like they should be chasing Redcoats with Andy Jackson at New Orleans in 1815.

#### THAT SPLENDID GREGG PRESS AGAIN

Gregg Press sent me another batch of their books, which are, to repeat what I said a couple issues back, excellent buys for libraries and serious collectors. They're sturdily bound and printed on acid-free paper which will last for centuries, which means if any given book is good enough to keep for rereading in your permanent collection, this is the

edition you want. And Editor Hartzwell tells me the print runs are sometimes as low as 200, so we're talking about Rareties.

The first item on the agenda is not a facsimile reprint of a paperback for once, but an original. SCIENCE FICTION STUDIES, Ed. R.D. Mullen and Darko Suvin (304 pages, \$15.00) is a collection of essays, letters, reviews, etc. from one of the leading academic SF fanzines -- excuse me -- Learned Journals. There is much of interest in it. Many fine critics are present, including Damon Knight, James Blish, Ursula LeQuin, Joanna Russ, Brian Aldiss, Douglas Barbour (upper case in such lofty company), Ian Watson, Stanislaw Lem (who is interesting in translation, muddled writing in original English), and some others. There are also some mediocre ones, namely Franz Rottensteiner, although even he can be worthwhile when not talking about the objects of his hatred/prejudice (Robert Heinlein), his vested financial interests (Lem, for whom he is literary agent, and chief prophet, and friend with whom Lem doesn't need enemies), or his religion (Marxism). His article on Philip Jose's Farmer is at least as good as the average criticism in an American fanzine, but you can skip the rest of his stuff.

The major problem of this material is the language. Much of it is written in Academese, which as I'm sure you know, is the language of professors and young writers trying to sound learned. It bears the same relationship to English that Government Bureaucratese does.

More simply, I'm sure most of you are aware that scholarly critics as a whole do not express themselves well. Any graduate student forced to plough through SHAKESPEARE QUARTERLY can't help but notice, if he has any ear for these things, that the writing isn't very good. More than that, it is coded. Academic critics who write for an audience consisting of nobody but other academic critics, frequently for the purpose of gaining tenure rather than because they have something to say, make specialized noises at one another. (It's largely because of my distaste for this sort of nonsense that I didn't try to become an academic critic myself. I have the credentials.) The rest of the world is in the position of another insect watching two ants tap each other's antennae -- it's a private message, or just a comforting action. Not for general consumption. While this closed-circle criticism is essentially harmless, since it affects neither the writers nor the readers of the literature it professes to be about,

\*\*\*I can only imagine what the Women's Libbers will say.

does it really deserve publication, much less republication? Somewhere in all this somebody said the first requirement of didactic writing is it be lucid. What is criticism if it isn't didactic? If you have an idea or insight, get it across. Otherwise spare us your deathless mumbings. Blish, LeGuin, Russ and the others come across with complete clarity, and they have something to say -- but then they're writers, so it figures.

I might also suggest the good professors examine their prejudices a bit more carefully and lay their dogmatic assumptions aside before giving public. If I give you proposition A, you might not accept it but will probably let it stand for purposes of the argument. But, if I mention in passing that A depends for its validity on propositions B, C, D, E and F, which of course you agree with me on, you'll probably bounce the book off the opposite wall. I found a couple of real winners in SCIENCE FICTION STUDIES, like Rottensteiner's bald and completely unsupported statement: "In SF there can be no development of character because there are no characters?" Who can take him seriously after that? (Does this mean there are no characters in Stanislaw Lem, or is he not SF because he is good?) David Porter writes clumsily and makes all sorts of standardized utterances, such as when he tells us two LeGuin characters make "the existential leap into the absurd," then proceeds without definition, or even blinking.

My all-time favorite quote, which I'd like to get done up as a poster so I can hang it over my desk, comes from one of the fictional critics in the dialogue which serves as an introduction:

"Ah, but common sense is a very limited instrument in scholarship." (p. xvii)

It seems to me this book is like a garden. Lots of good vegetables growing, but somebody really should have pulled the weeds.



#### GREGG REPRINTS:

Reprints are what Gregg does best. Lately they've been doing these: 10,000 LIGHTYEARS FROM HOME, the first American hardcover of the first collection of "James Tiptree's" (i.e. Alice Sheldon's) short fiction, originally published by Ace in 1973. There's a new and very good introduction by Gardner Dozois, who is a writer and not an academic. This

book is historically important, but heretical as I am, I don't think Tiptree got really good as a writer until afterwards. I didn't become a fan of hers until such stories as "The Last Flight of Dr. Ain" (not here), "Beam Us Home" (last one in the book), and "The Girl Who Was Plugged In" (nope). I felt such stories as "Help" ("Pupa Knows Best") and "Faithful to Thee in our Fashion" ("Parmutual Planet") and a couple other early Tiptree efforts were dull when they first appeared, and I still do. Certainly her first published story, "Birth of a Salesman," would have remained unreprinted if its author hadn't gone on to develop into a major talent. So I can't agree with Gardner when he says this is one of the most significant SF short story collections ever. You might be able to produce that by assembling the most recent Tiptree efforts, but this book is mostly an early manifestation of somebody who later got very good.

Philip K. Dick's SOLAR LOTTERY (188 pages \$9.50, introduction by Thomas Disch) is also the beginning of a great career (less precisely the beginning, since Dick had been selling short fiction for three years previous to it), not a great work in itself. It reads like literature, coherent Van Vogt, if you can imagine that. Remarkably above average for a 1950s Ace Double, and in it are the stirrings of the mind that produced THE MAN IN THE HIGH CASTLE six years later. Daniel F. Galouye's DARK UNIVERSE (154 pages, \$15.00, introduction by Robert Thurston) is quite the opposite, the high water mark in the career of a forgotten writer. Galouye died recently, but published his last novel four years ago. Nobody noticed. But he was almost a major writer once, and nearly beat Heinlein's STRANGER IN A STRANGE LAND for the Hugo. (The story goes Galouye thought the Heinlein a great book and urged people to vote for it. He lost by a slim margin.) Nowadays only fans with encyclopedia brains like me recognize his name. This should not be so. Read the book and find out why. The best work didn't win in 1961. Admittedly a Gregg reprint won't revive his reputation much, but it's a start. Gregg editions of his other novels would be in order, along with paperbacks from some mass market company.

Other items received are more typical Gregg fare -- classics or near classics preserved in hardcover. Brian Aldiss's HOTHOUSE (253 pages, \$12.50, introduction by Joseph Milicia) won a Hugo for best series in 1962 or thereabouts (by a quirk of the rules no longer there)

but it deserved it, and anyone who really admires Aldiss will want this edition. It is the first complete text to be published in America, the others having been chopped up by the publisher. (The American title was THE LONG AFTERNOON ON EARTH.) Alexei Panshin's RITE OF PASSAGE (254 pages, \$12.00, introduction by author) should be familiar to most of you, but this is the first hardcover, and the introduction, wherein Panshin reflects on what it's like to have written a "classic" less than ten years old, is new. Presumably Alexei can resume his fiction career any time, and sometime soon he will. And finally, if you're not familiar with Theodore Sturgeon's VENUS PLUS X (which didn't win anything, alas), you should be. It's probably the best examination of sex roles in SF prior to THE LEFT HAND OF DARKNESS. You'll note that for all his fame, Sturgeon's books are hard to find of late. This printing is a positive service, 160 pages, \$8.50. That's surprisingly cheap for a library-intended reprint. No more expensive than a trade book. You can afford it. (Introduction by Paul Williams)

\*\*\*\*\*

7-10-77 Time, gentlemen and ladies. I must get this issue to the printer tomorrow and hope to get it back by July 17th or so, and get it into the mails by the 22nd or so...on schedule.

NEXT ISSUE: When have you read a long, detailed interview with Jack Vance? I've got one, about 6,000 words, that covers his entire writing career. Conducted by Peter Close.

♣ A VERY INTERESTING INTERVIEW with A. E. van Vogt, just received, conducted by Jeffrey Elliot.

♣ A funny satirical piece, "The Annual Nebulous Awards" by Greg and Jim Benford.

♣ A ribald sf poem by Neal Wilgus titled "Limbo Blues."

♣ "Science Faction Shelf" by Robert Anton Wilson---five reviews of fringe-science and fringe-reality books as only Wilson can review them...from the inside.

♣ An interview with Piers Anthony which I thought I could get into this issue, but couldn't. Good stuff. Conducted by Cliff Biggers.

♣ Plus my long-running "Monolog," "Other Voices," Alter-Ego's warped point of view, Darrell Schweitzer...and always a few surprises

♣ There will be dozens of fine Alex Gilliland cartoons, and with luck some funny illos from Randy Mohr and others. Also more "farm" cartoons from Mike Gilbert.

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Zelazny"; An interview...

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**SCIENCE FICTION REVIEW #21** An in-  
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